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# THE SKY CONTEST;

## Or, Bessie of the Red Balloon

By Augustin Wilber Breeden

"THE red! The wyte! The bloo!" barked Johnson, the manager and spieler for the big altitude balloon-race featuring at the district fair. "In the red you will have the pleasure of seeing Madame Beaumonnoir, the smallest lady airy-onaut in the world! The wyte! In the wyte balloon you will see Count Arpeggio Masticati, the well-known Italian balloonist. The bloo! The bloo car will carry Professor Hermana Arndt, of Berlin, known all over Europe as the King of the Air!"

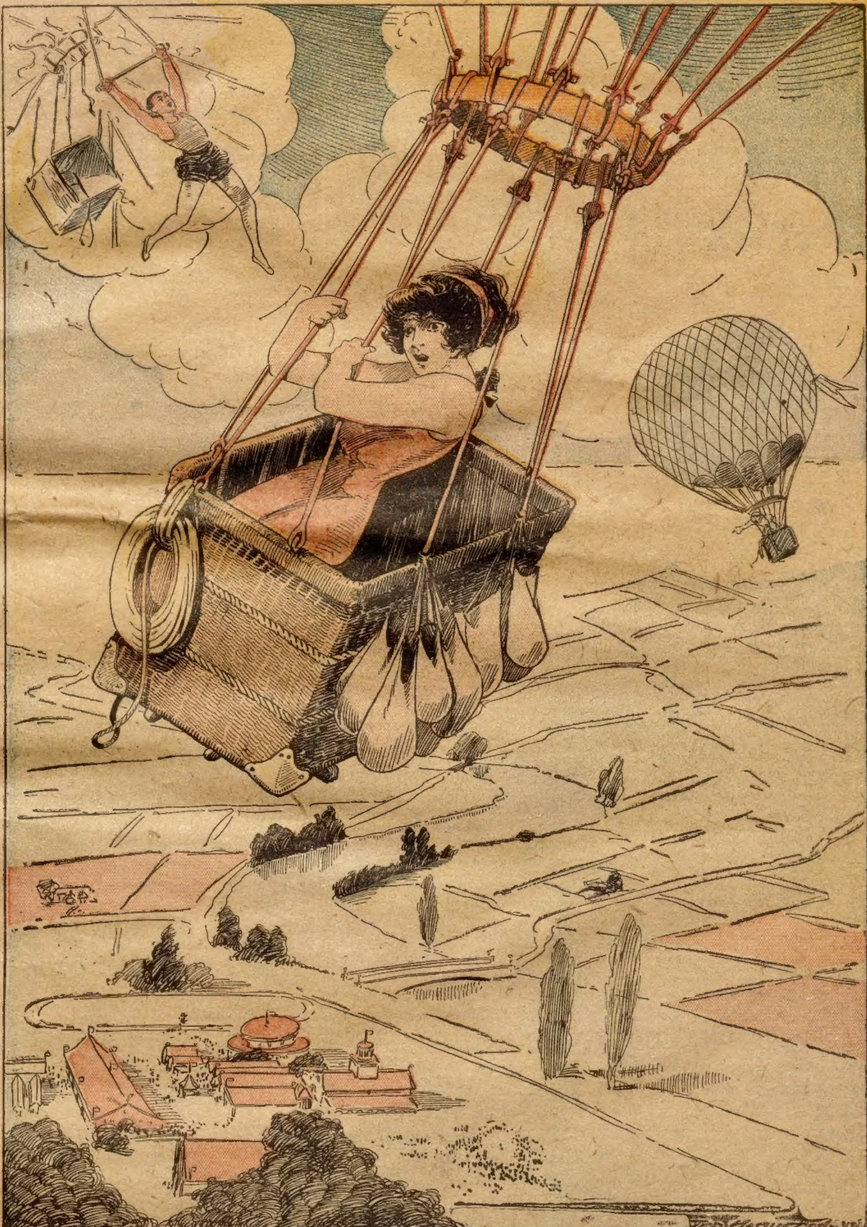
Nat Cunningham (Count Masticati) felt a nervous thrill as the big spieler rattled hoarsely on, and the three giants of gas and silk tugged at their ropes like things of life. Today Nat's pulse was beating a tattoo on his eardrums here at the start; and he even forgot to smile at the strange managerial code that must transform just pretty Bessie Osborne, ex-waitress at a Van Noy restaurant, into Madame Beaumonnoir, while he and big Bob Ferris became something equally foreign and high-sounding.

At the very opening of the season both Nat and Ferris had fallen madly in love with Bessie; and now, as the season neared its close, the positive and negative poles of the affair had about reached the sparking point. Nat had an instinctive fear of some sort of underhand work from his big rival. But he was ready to dare anything for the charming Beaumonnoir. Who would not be? When she dressed in her creamy, crinkly silk gown and big white, plumy, picture hat, she was adorable; when she put on her dainty little white cap and apron and made rarebit and French coffee for the "bunch," she gave Nat a homey, firesidey feeling, and made him want to quit ballooning and go in for a cottage on the eighty of Illinois blackland that his father had promised him; but when she donned her spangled red tights and pink lampshade skirt for the race, she was so fetchingly "cute" and petite and cuddly that she made the poor boy quite distracted.

During the entire summer the girl had seemed to waver between Nat and his rival, but there were now only two more short engagements ahead of them, and the choosing time had come. The night before, Bessie had summoned the two young men to the ice cream parlor, up in town, and had told them that whoever could pass her in the race the next day, his she would be. Ferris had grumbled at the conditions, saying that he was much heavier that Nat; but the girl had saucily reminded him that he had a newer and better balloon, and that he might abide by the terms she laid down, or drop out of the race like a coward. Then she pouted her pretty lips, as much as to say, "Look at me—am I not worth a hard trial? None but a hero for mine!"

Now the moment for the supreme test had come. The assembled thousands were all looking in one direction—a sea of heads and faces with crested billows of parasols and gaudy millinery.

"Good luck to you, and you!" cried Bessie, as all three sprang into their respective baskets and Johnson wound up his spiel with: "All right, Barney; let 'em go!"



Up, straight up, shot the three great bags as if exulting to be free, neither gaining on the other two, and all so close together that their sides seemed about to touch. A great shout came up to the three, as the mass of human beings fell away rapidly below and crinkled itself up into a smaller and ever smaller compass. Not a breath of wind was stirring as the three mounted up and up. Nat drew in his breath, collected his wits, and looked across at [illegible]. She was laughing into his eyes with all the mad exhilaration of the race. Then he turned toward the blue basket, only to meet a determined glare and a firm-set jaw.

"Better let me throw out a little sand and get out from between you two!" he shouted to Bob. "This is dangerous, bobbing along right together; we'll get tangled. You two can catch me as soon as we part a little!"

"Why not let us go up and you drop behind?" jeered Ferris.

"All right!" shouted Nat, and felt himself trebly paid for his generosity by the bright look of appreciation that Bessie flashed at him.

A moment later he was alone, and a little black stream of sand on either side told him how glad were the others of his suggestion. He tried to follow them with his eye, but they were too close in to his own gas-bag. Then a panic of jealous fear seized him. What if they should not open out and give him room? What if they should close in and block his upward course altogether? Almost before the young balloonist realized what he was doing, he had added a third and larger stream of sand to the other two, and was shooting rapidly up between them.

"Great guns! What are you doing, you idiot?" came the voice of his rival, hoarse with excitement.

At the same moment Nat looked into the laughing face of Bessie, who was making a peculiar upward movement with her head which plainly said, "Come on up; I'll stay out of the way."

Nat obeyed the signal, and a moment

later was rubbing sides with the big blue bag, while the dainty red car was somewhere above, Ferris glowered at him across the few feet of space that separated them, and he glowered back at Ferris. He knew now that it was war to the death between them. He looked down at the checkered fields below—stubble fields, pasture, and meadow lands, orchards and cornfields and summer-plowed wheat land, all laid off in perfect patterns, with here and there a little white village and here and there a creeping, worm-like freight train or a rapidly sliding passenger. It was a toy world, beginning to look blue and dark even in the bright September sunshine. Cheer after cheer came up from the crowds below with wonderful volume and distinctness, but that was the only thing that broke in upon the unnatural isolation of the three.

In spite of his man's size, Nat was little more than a boy in age, yet he was determined that no one should ever be able to say he had a yellow streak. He would leave that for the other fellow to develop. In the midst of these thoughts, the balloons shot up through a wet cloud, completely cutting off the view below and rendering their isolation complete. The red balloon was now in plain view above Nat, but the blue was right against him on the left. Again Nat caught the look of the girl as she laughed down at him. She seemed unconscious of the danger—unconscious of everything save the mad joy of the race and her woman's triumph in causing this battle. Nat ground his teeth with grim determination. He would not be beaten. No overbearing bullyragger like Bob Ferris should ever wed his darling Bessie; he would die in the air first. With a quick, practiced movement he threw out a half-bag of sand, and his car plunged upward with startling suddenness, leaving the blue bag completely behind and swinging almost against the red.

"Look out, Bessie!" he shouted, as he saw the danger for the girl. But Bessie swung gracefully out and up, and her pretty face was still laughing down to him.

At the same moment Nat became conscious of the blood flooding up in his head and roaring in his ears as if trying to break from its capillaries, and he knew that he was at a tremendous height. He could not understand the suddenness of this upward plunge, and thought he had thrown out too much ballast in his excitement.

"What's the matter, Old Whitey?" he said. "I never saw you behave like this before."

He reached for the valve cord and pulled at it violently. At the same instant he heard the jeering voice of Ferris thundering up to him.

"Your valves won't open; they're nailed down! If you go any higher you'll blow up!"

Be it known to those who have never examined an old-fashioned "country fair" balloon, that each has an opening at the bottom for safety against explosions, while at the top is a large wooden valve held closed by a spring and by the pressure of the gas, but which may be opened by pulling a rope which dangles down through the gas-bag and out at the lower opening. Such was the general construction of both the red and the blue balloons. But "Old Whitey" was fearfully and wonderfully made. Instead of having an opening at the bottom, she was closed up and had a safety valve, and the valve at the top had its rope threaded in rings over the side of the gas-bag instead of down through it, and was accompanied by a device for being opened thus from the outside. Where Johnson had got this old contraption no one ever knew; but she behaved beautifully in the air, and that was enough for him. The one dangerous point about her was the chance of her valves not working.

Nat knew now the dastardly trick that Ferris had practiced upon him. He had grown careless of late about trying the valves before the start, and the crafty Ferris had judged, and judged correctly, that in the excitement of this day's race he would forget it. Now too much of his ballast was gone for him to control the balloon at all. He looked up to Bessie with an appeal in his eyes; but she had evidently not heard Ferris' words—she was still laughing down to him. He started to tell her—to ask that the race be forfeited to him, but the sight of that laughing face gave him a fierce sort of courage and he resolved to fight it out. He knew how thin "Old Whitey" was. Still he hoped against all hope, and meanwhile he kept tugging away at the valve rope. He believed that even if there was a tear he could release his parachute in time to escape.

He was plunging upward with dizzying swiftness. In spite of all that his rival could do the blue bag lost steadily; and above, Bessie had thrown out the last of her ballast in her effort to keep in the lead. Nat was crowding upon her and eagerly preparing to ask her to speak the word that would make him victor, when he saw her cut away the frail wicker basket with a sharp knife, leaving to the straps about her body the task of her support. A little ballast counts for a great deal in the upper air, and Bessie's balloon was new and capable of standing a high pressure; so she shot upward once more with a buoyancy that surpassed even that of the juggled white bag.

The race was getting on Nat's nerves at last. He seemed to be swelling like a deep sea fish in shallow water; blood was running from his nose and mouth; he was freezing with cold, save on one side where the sun burned him like a stove. The inky air cut off the view in every direction, save where the clouds loomed bold and mountain-like below. He was lost in a chaos of cold and darkness, with only a brilliant patch of red above him, out of which a sweet girlish face laughed and laughed eternally, and below there was that gigantic sphere of blue booming at him like a monster of revenge. The worst of it all was that he knew Bessie was suffering, perhaps even more than he, but that she was too determined to ever give up. When he could endure the strain no longer, he turned to the face in the red frame.

"Bessie!" he cried, trying to keep up a brave, victorious note. "Bessie, girlie, I have won the race fair and square! I can't be beat, anyway; my valves are nailed down!"

"Bully for you!" cried the laughing face in the crimson frame, coughing up blood with every word. "I nailed mine down, too—thought I might get cold feet too soon, you know!"

Nat knew that the girl did not understand the difference in the construction of the two balloons, but her grit was an inspiration to him, and he rose to the occasion. He knew the danger that they were both in; but he had seen the look on the girl's face which marks the heroine—the look of one for whom life and death count for little when a goal is in sight, and he knew that the only way to end the race was to pass her. He threw out the last of his ballast and swept past her in a moment. He read his reward in her eyes, and then——

With a sound like the crack of a sail in a storm the white bag exploded. Nat pulled the cord for the parachute. There was a sickening sense of falling, and then the blessed feeling of relief as the good parachute seemed to open.

But merciful Heavens! What was that above him? No open parachute, but a half-opened one in a tangle of silk and cordage! He was staggering downward through the sky at a sickening speed. One moment he was drenched in clouds, and the next he was plunging toward the checker-board of fields and lanes below him. He closed his eyes with horror. He was zigzagging through space at meteoric speed. God! How they were pelting him! Was it hailing upward, or were these red-hot stars he was running into? He felt a sudden shock.

When he came to his senses sufficiently to note anything at all, a crowd was standing close about him, and some one was expostulating and shouting: "Stand back there! Give him air!" And then——

He heard a locomotive puffing slowly just outside his window, and languidly opened his eyes on a pot of large, woolly-headed chrysanthemums. The air in his room was cool and fragrant and full of the sweet influences of Indian summer. He drank in the pungent odor of autumn flowers and frosted forest leaves and thought he was in the other world. The he heard men's voices below, and an odor of roast beef and fried onions mingled with the more ethereal one, and he knew he was in a boarding-house. As he lay there trying to collect his thoughts, a pretty little woman in a snowy cap and apron came over to his bed and stooped down beside him. That face? Where had he seen it before? Oh, yes, he remembered now; it was the one in the big scarlet frame that day above the clouds. But why was it here? Angels always stayed in Heaven, he thought, not in men's boarding-houses. Finally he mustered up energy enough to question the apparition.

"Where am I? And where is Bessie?" he managed to murmur, after several trials.

"You!" purred the angel sweetly. "Oh, you're in a railroad flop-house in Junction. And Bessie? I'm Bessie; don't you know me? I'm working at a Van Noy restaurant across the tracks, and keepin' the wolf away for us both. But it isn't for long now. After I finally found your home address I wrote to your old man. We're going to be married—you and me—I asked his permission, and he said all right. And what do you think? He has agreed to deed us that eighty that he promised you if you would quit ballooning. Wasn't that just darling of him?"

Nat's eyes devoured the wonderful chastened beauty of his bride-to-be, and he felt that he was the luckiest dog in seven States. Then that green-eyed handmaiden of true love—jealousy—made her debut, and he asked feebly: "Where's Ferris? What became of him?"

"Ferris? Oh, search me!" replied the girl. "Johnson fired him the day you got hurt, and I don't know where he went."

The end.

* * *

## Disappointment.

"Well, I don't think much of Mrs. Blizzle, even if she is a new neighbor and dresses well and all that," says the lady with the thin hose and the eager ears.

"Why, she seemed to be a very pleasant sort of a woman," says the large, placid lady.

"What do you suppose she did? After several of us had become acquainted with her and told her all we knew about everybody on the street, she asked us to come to her house the other afternoon, saying she had something very interesting to tell us about Mrs. Bridey, who was recently married and who has just moved in on the next street but one. Well, we all rushed over, and what do you think? She kept us sitting there for half an hour while she told us what a nice family Mrs. Bridey came from and what a nice man her husband is, and how much good they have both done, and how devoted they are to each other, and how Mrs. Bridey never has any but good things to say about her neighbors. And she called that interesting!"

"Well," smiled the large, placid lady. "It was at least unusual."

* * *

## The Looking-Glass.

What if there should be a resurrection of that which has been buried in looking-glasses? Little children's faces, anxious mothers, budding girls beginning to suspect their own beauty, vain and giggling looks, grave and sad looks of those who dislike to appear old, vexed looks of those who have cut themselves in shaving, double images of lovers glancing upon the sweet picture of their affectionate embrace, prim old fogies touching up their gray whiskers and covering their baldness with the few stray locks yet left; the studied attitudes of the politician, who gracefully poses as an orator in his own room, and wishes he could appear to the same advantage before an audience; the affectation of the woman who realizes that she is growing old, and tries to assume the airs and graces of the young. Ah! many would shrink to have their looking-glasses reveal their secrets.

* * *

If a girl has rosy cheeks when she gets on the shady side of 40, people begin to speak of her complexion as florid.

## *LOVE*

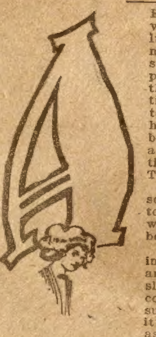
I know not when you crept into my heart,
Or if direct, or by some hidden way.
I only know you came, and are a part
Now of my life forever and for aye.

I think, may be, by way of your soft eyes,
Or by your kindly, gentle mien you came;
At any rate, in some such subtle guise
You found my heart, and lit the mystic flame.

And flowers now a sweeter fragrance yield,
The songs of birds are sweeter than they were,
A fairer sheen bedecks both wood and field,
Softer and purple-hazed the atmosphere.

If this be love—as it must surely be—
(Else what could so the heart and soul enthrall?)
Then give me love, for love is ecstasy,
And casts a marvelous glamour over all.

## WHAT SHE THOUGHT.



AFTER the you woman in pink h lured the you man into a seclud seat under t palms on the pl that she was t tired to dance, s talked herse hoarse witho being able to sta a flow of convers tion on his pa Then he coughed.

"There—er—w something I want to ask you—er wanted to say," began, hesitatingl

The young woma in pink leaned ove and adjusted h slipper rosette conceal her gratif surprise. "What wa it?" she murmur as she sat up a regarded him confidingly.

"Somehow," he said, "I feel that you a ways understand me—you have a symp thetic nature."

"I am glad if you think so, Mr. Friller the girl in pink said softly.

"Oh, I do!" declared the young ma earnestly. "It makes it easier——"

"I hope, Mr. Friller—Henry," the gi in pink said, looking at him with gre seriousness, "that you feel it easy to sa anything to me. Why, we've been frien so long! It was four years ago last Ja uary that we were introduced!"

"Was it?" asked the young ma startled.

"Do you think I could ever forget," th girl in pink asked him, tenderly. "O no, indeed."

"It's been a long time," agreed t young man. "By the way," he said sud denly, "you know Antoinette Grave don't you?"

The girl in pink wrinkled her brow bit.

"Yes, I used to know Antoinette," sh said. "I haven't seen much of her of lat because, really, she's not in our crowd all!"

"Oh, is that so?" asked the young ma in some surprise.

"No," the girl in pink told him. "Poo Antoinette simply dropped out of thing —she is so very odd, you know. I fe sorry for a girl who fails to be popula Of course, I can't even faintly imagin how it seems, but I should think it woul be awful!"

"As bad as that?" asked the young man.

"Goodness, yes," said the girl in pin "You never see Antoinette anywher She hasn't been to a dance for a year or s And she wears such funny clothes! O course you can't really blame a girl if sh has no instinct for style and doesn't car to keep up with things! Why, last winte when every one was pawning her rings t buy enough hair to keep up with th styles I saw Antoinette going aroun with just her own hair on——"

"She has a lot of it," said the youn man.

"But fancy!" cried the girl in pink "No matter how much hair you have yo can't do it up in style if one end of it i fastened to your head! She just didn' care! And she's never had a hobble skir to her name. She's gone right on wearing her last year's tailor suit as thoug she felt perfectly up to date in it. Don' you like to see a girl progressive?"

"Er—yes," said the young ma "But——"

"I really don't like to say anythin that sounds like running another perso down," went on the girl in pink, in a pained voice. "That isn't my nature, a you know, Mr. Friller—Henry. But Antoinette always struck me as being terribly empty-headed! I never could ge her to settle down to a serious talk—sh would act restless or laugh or mov away. Why, she was almost rude th last time I saw her. I was nearly distracted trying to decide between tw band trimmings for a dress, and I begged Antoinette, whom I met, to talk it over—she said she couldn't as she had an appointment with her mission class or something. She was just selfish and didn't care.

"I think a really sweet-natured girl would take some interest in her friends' affairs, don't you? I never laid it u against Antoinette, though. She's just odd.

"Poor Antoinette! I wonder what life can hold for unfortunate girls like her! They have nothing to look forward to! But I try not to dwell on such things. There is no use in harrowing one's sel over the misfortunes of others. H ever, I feel things so deeply. I reall fer, Mr. Friller—Henry, if I think e one isn't as happy and contented as self, I——

"But you said you had something ask me?"

"I asked it," confessed the young man looking red and uncomfortable. "I asked what you thought of Antoinette. see, I wanted to tell you that she an are engaged!"

* * *

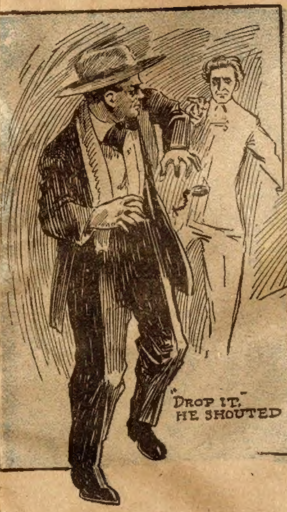
## Plated.

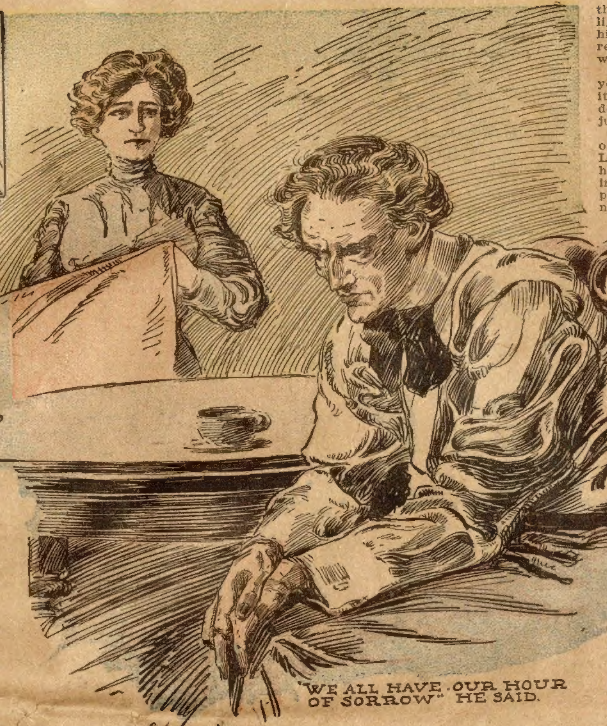
"Then you think she isn't pure gold?"
"Fashion-plated. I should say."

# A LOVE THAT LIVED;

## Or, JOAN MARQUAND'S FAITH

### By AGNES DOROTHY CAMP


"DROP IT," HE SHOUTED


"WE ALL HAVE OUR HOUR OF SORROW" HE SAID.

TED HAMILTON.

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### CHAPTER I.

### IN THE ROAD.

THE loud, blustering reports of the motor fell into abrupt silence as the driver brought his car to a halt.

"Good morning, Miss Joan; this is a pleasant surprise."

The speaker, Gerald Martell, a tall, dashing man of twenty-five, leaned across the wheel of his large limousine, drawn to the edge of the road.

On either side stretched away in the distance the lovely, quiet meadows and pastureland of Green County. At the end of the road, and about a mile from where the machine had stopped, could be seen the beautiful house and grounds of the Martells.

The girl, walking slowly along the road, apparently had not heard the approaching car until the gurgle and hum of the motor and the grind of the brakes made her look up with a slightly startled expression. Joan Marquand greeted the man in a quiet, dignified manner. The two had been introduced early in the spring, and though Joan had carefully avoided the young millionaire, he had managed to waylay her a number of times during the summer.

"You are as hard to catch as the will-o'-the-wisp," he said, trying to get a look into the averted eyes of the girl. "I have been looking for you for over a week."

The girl remained silent.

"Why do you avoid me, Joan?" he asked, irritably.

"I have asked you before, Mr. Martell, not to look for me," said the girl formally.

"You would not say that to your artist friend," he sneered angrily.

"I should not have to," she retorted, with flashing eyes.

She turned away haughtily, and then glanced up and down the road as if expecting some one.

In an instant he leaped from the automobile, and came to her side.

"Joan, my beautiful Joan, I love you!" he cried, excitedly. "Forgive me, dear one; but say that you love me!" He tried to take her hand.

"I do not love you," she answered, resolutely, "and I cannot listen to such words from you."

Trying to maintain a calmness she was far from feeling, the girl once more started to walk away. Joan was only a simple country maiden, but she had a counselor in her father, a retired [illegible]man. The old man always cautioned [illegible] against accepting attentions from [illegible]e above her station. As a violinist [illegible] theater for thirty years, Mr. Marquand had seen the world from the footlights, and in his orchestra seat had become familiar with the ne'er-do-well city millionaire of the Gerald Martell type. [illegible] she had no need of caution from her [illegible]ner where this man was concerned. She instinctively distrusted him; rumors of his disgraceful escapades had reached the little village of Bornton. Then, too, he was engaged to the daughter of a wealthy railroad magnate.

Annoyed at the rejection of what he considered a "mere little country girl," the young millionaire, sought by all the matchmaking mothers in New York, vowed that he would "break the spirit of this cautious little prude," as he called her in baffled rage.

He had waited too long for this opportunity to let her go so easily. Once more he caught her, and this time held her hands firmly.

"Joan," he said wildly, and the girl could feel his breath on her cheek. "I will not let you go until you give me some hope."

Joan, now thoroughly alarmed at the man's vehemence, wondered how best to break up the interview. She tried to get away from him, but he held her fast.

Just then a man emerged from a gate a little to the left of where the couple stood. He carried a camp-stool and easel. The newcomer, a quiet, good-looking man of about thirty, wore a slouch hat, a slouch coat, and slouchy trousers. Added to this, he had a slouching walk. He raised his hat, and in drawling, slouching tones apprised Miss Marquand "that her father wished her to return to the house; and if she were ready, he would accompany her."

The coolness of the artist so enraged the other man, that, with a muttered oath, he went back to his car. An odd, choking, gurgle sounded from the big machine, as it leaped and lurched around a curve, and finally hurtled with a roar down the straight stretch of road to the Martell mansion.

With all Joan's dignity, she was unable to check the frightened glance caused by Martell's malignant look.

"Did I disturb a pleasant conference?" inquired the artist, in his slow, drawling tones.

"Oh, Mr. Lester, I was so relieved to see you!" said Joan, gratefully.

"And you were not sorry that I came?" he asked, gently.

Amazed, Joan looked up, and met his glowing face, the embodiment of the joy of life and love.

"Did you lose this?" he asked, with a happy smile, handing her a card. "I knew your handwriting."

Joan gave a faint cry. For all over the card was written "Roy Lester and Joan Marquand."

"Oh!" she gasped, piteously.

"You are surprised that I am here?" he said taking the card from her hand, and placing it tenderly in his pocket. "My dear, dear girl, after this did you think I could be anywhere else?"

She covered her face. "You are not angry?" he asked. Then he came nearer and took both cold little hands in his strong grasp, his grave brown eyes shining with earnest regard. "Did you think me such a brute, my dear, that I should have shown you that card when I could not claim you?"

Her fair face was raised, her blue eyes questioning his.

"You mean——"

"I mean that no one can question my right to win you. Three months ago I would not have dared to say this. But I have just finished a picture which will bring affluence that in my wildest dreams I never anticipated," he said, with quiet enthusiasm. "My parents are dead," he went on softly. "I have one brother living, and although we have not lived up to their measure of virtue, I can look into your father's face and say, 'I am not unworthy of his treasure.'"

She looked up at him, her sweet face bright as his own, her golden hair in fluffy curls peeping out around the pretty sun hat set attractively on her head.

They had reached a quiet spot some distance from the road. He drew her toward him unchecked. They gazed upon each other with the strange, dreamy, delightful understanding of new-found love.

"I am so glad, dear, you have given me the right to protect you from that despicable Martell," said Roy finally, as he picked up his easel and stool.

Joan shuddered as she thought of her recent interview with the millionaire.

"I shall never go out again unless you are with me," she whispered.

Roy was charmed at the sweet surrender, as she tripped lightly by his side, her cheeks flushed and her eyes sparkling with delight in her new-found happiness.

A little later Joan sat on the arm of Mr. Marquand's chair, while Roy stood respectfully waiting to hear the old man's decision.

"This is a great surprise, Lester," said the musician. "Tell me, my boy, what makes you think that you want my Joan. Can you make her happy?"

Then, fervently, Roy Lester used all the words and arguments in the lover's dictionary to assure the anxious father of the ardor of his passion. Convinced of the young man's sincerity, Mr. Marquand finally gave his consent to their marriage; and Joan Marquand and Roy Lester were engaged.

"Now run along and play, children," said the old man, with a feeble attempt at gayety, as he reached for his violin.

As the artist and the girl stepped outside the door, her father commenced a Beethoven sonata. Joan halted, and placing a tremulous hand on her lover's arm, sighed, her blue eyes filling with tears.

"He only plays that when he is very, very sad," she said.

### CHAPTER II.

### TWO OF A KIND.

The following morning Gerald Martell strolled into the garage at Martell Court.

"Here, Le Blanc," he called to the chauffeur, "bring out the car, put on a new tire and pump her up. I am going for a spin."

While the man hurriedly carried out the instructions, Gerald walked away, lighting a cigar as he went. Suddenly his eyes fell upon the figure of a man resting against a tree with his back toward him.

"I know that figure," muttered the young millionaire. "By the Lord Harry, it's that slouching artist! I'll turn the dogs on him, and make him move lively just once."

He was about to call the dogs, but it occurred to him that he would enjoy Lester's embarrassment when he ordered him off the grounds. His footsteps were inaudible on the soft turf, and the trespasser was quite unconscious of Gerald's nearness.

"Hey, there, are you aware that you are violating the privacy of these grounds, and are liable to prosecution?" he shouted insultingly.

The stranger started violently, and there was nothing of the "slouch" in the alertness of his movement.

"Beg pardon, sir," he said obsequiously. "No offense intended, I assure you."

Gerald stood aghast. Here was the artist—face, form and voice. The man only lacked Roy Lester's tantalizing coolness and the characteristic slouch. Upon a closer inspection Martell noticed a lowering, sinister expression on the man's face, and signs of dissolute habits. His clothes looked thin and shabby. Martell was determined to solve the mystery. So pretending to be mollified by the man's civility, he graciously pardoned the intrusion.

"I thought that you belonged in the village and knew you were trespassing?" he said.

"Naw, I'm not from the village," said the stranger, in tones of disgust. "You have a mighty fine place here; but the Great White Way is good enough for yours truly. There would be no 'near to nature' for Rex Lester if that precious brother of mine would send along the dough when I write for it, instead of preaching a sermon, and putting me to the trouble of coming back to the soil."

As Gerald Martell listened to the man, an overpowering desire to punish the nonchalant artist and humble him in the eyes of Joan took possession of him. Here was Roy's brother, a knave, if face and manner were any indications. Martell had seen enough of the shady side of life in big cities to feel sure of his judgment of the man. A diabolical scheme had matured in his crafty brain during the seconds he "sized up" the fellow.

"So you need money, my friend?" he asked, insinuatingly. "And perhaps you are not over-particular how you get it, so long as it is easy—and safe."

The millionaire emphasized the last word and waited. Rex Lester threw away the cigar stump he had been chewing, and thrust his hands into his pockets. Then their eyes met; and the two young men looked intently, each taking the other's measure.

"What's the trick?" asked Lester at last, with a leer. "Fire away—I'm your man."

Martell disclosed his plot, and carefully explained how it could be safely carried out. The other wretch listened eagerly, nodding from time to time showing that he was equal to the occasion. "And now," said Martell, in conclusion, handing the other man a roll of bills, "we had better not be seen together. Meet me here at the same time tomorrow."

"All right, partner," said Lester, familiarly.

Martell resented the tone and the implied alliance.

"Not partner," he said arrogantly. "Employer and employee."

"Just as you say, boss," said the other, carelessly. And they parted.

"So my dear brother is in love," muttered Rex, as he walked along in the direction of the little station at Bornton. "Well, I think I can stop his little game as neatly as he terminated my first love venture. He sent my little Edna back to her mother because she was only fifteen. Curse him for an interfering Molly!"

Just then he saw Roy Lester and Joan coming along hand in hand. In a moment they would be face to face. But that was not a part of Rex' scheme, and with a catlike movement he slid behind a tree; and from that to another, until there was no further danger of recognition. The lovers were walking in the direction of the Marquand home, and Rex followed at a safe distance.

Soon the strains of a violin reached his ears, and he saw the couple enter a pretty cottage with honeysuckle and clematis around the door.

"A cozy little nest," grinned Rex. "I will take a look at the back, and see if it is just as inviting."

Meanwhile Roy and Joan were trying to keep Mr. Marquand cheered up. The old man was taking his loss very seriously, although he said little about it. So the lovers took no more walks that day, but remained with the old man until long after dark. Joan sat later than usual with her father, and being in a reminiscent mind, he told the girl about her mother, and how he had bought the little cottage for her before Joan was born. They had been so happy, he said; he used to go to the theater every day, and his little wife, looking just like Joan, would stand at the door and watch him go down the road to the station.

And then Joan made plans for the future. Her father was to live with them in the city all winter, after she and Roy were married, and they would be together in the cottage all summer.

"And we are going to be so happy," she said joyfully. "And now play something for me, dear. I will dance for you."

The old man took up the violin and commenced a few bars of a minuet.

"No, no!" protested the girl. "Something lively."

The musician smiled and started another accompaniment. Joan shook out her wavy hair, and picked up her skirts. Then she began to caper and frisk from a waltz to a reel and then to a jig. Around and around, faster and faster she went, her feet never seeming to touch the floor. The old man laughed until the tears rained down his cheeks. Still he played, and Joan danced until she sank exhausted on a chair.

And later when she listened from her room for the usual violin lullaby, Joan was relieved to hear it was not a Beethoven sonata.

## CHAPTER III.

## A FAMILIAR FACE.

Mr. Marquand had gone to bed, and there was a deathlike stillness over everything. Even the crickets and the frogs were quieter than usual. Suddenly he was startled by sounds outside his door. He knew that it was somebody walking as a certain board always creaked when stepped upon.

"Perhaps it is Joan," he thought. "But the girl went to sleep a long time ago," he decided.

So the musician lay quite still and watched the door. The room was flooded with moonlight, making it possible for him to see with little difficulty any person who might enter. A second later a stealthy figure invaded the room. It was a tall man, who wore a slouch hat. A muffler was drawn over his face.

He looked cautiously around, apparently not seeing the man in bed. Then he picked up Mr. Marquand's vest, and took the watch from its pocket. That watch had been given to the old man by the theater employees when he retired, and he naturally valued it very highly.

Springing up, the musician grabbed a pistol lying on a chair at the bedside.

"Drop it!" he shouted, pointing the revolver at the intruder.

The man stood dumfounded, and the watch fell to the floor with a thud.

"Do not shoot," the intruder cried in affrighted tones. "It is I, Roy Lester!" And pulling off the muffler, his features were plainly visible to the musician.

For a second the old man was speechless. Then his indignation found words.

"You miserable petty rascal!" he cried disdainfully. "You wolf in sheep's clothing, you profaner of sanctity! I will not shoot you. I leave you to your own conscience and to one who is mightier than I. Begone!"

The man slunk out. Joan in her room across the landing had heard her father's voice, and hurried to his side. The girl never forgot the sight. The old man stood panting in the middle of the room, his face purple with rage. Still holding the revolver in his hand, he pointed with the other to the watch on the floor.

Just then the front door shut with a bang. Joan looked out the window, and in the bright moonlight saw Lester disappear into the night.

At the sight of the girl's face as she turned from the window the old man's features relaxed, and he folded the poor child to his arms.

"My dear lamb!" he murmured, stroking and patting her head.

Joan did not faint or give way to hysteria, but like a normal girl found relief in a flood of tears.

"Oh, father," she wailed between her sobs, "I loved him so much!"

"Yes, dear, and I would have pledged my life on his integrity," said her father regretfully.

And he used every art that fatherly love is master of to comfort the heartbroken girl. It was after daybreak before they separated. Alone in her room, Joan laid her cheek against the hand Roy had touched and kissed the ring he had placed upon her finger.

"I wish I had died before I saw him," she cried to her heart, as she fell into a fitful slumber, which lasted until long past her usual time for rising.

Morning found a pale and languid Joan across the breakfast table from Mr. Marquand. Yet, by a contradiction of the heart, her pride in loving overcame the knowledge that only sorrow could result. Her eyes were lustrous and her heart beat violently, as she waited for her father to broach the subject of the night before. But the old musician, seeing the colorless, eager face, was wise in his generation, and remained silent.

The meal over, Mr. Marquand invited Joan to walk with him, and the two paced the little veranda running round the cottage. For the life of her Joan could not suppress the feeling that perhaps the events of the night had been only a dream. She was soon to know.

Stopping to train some clematis vines that had fallen in the night, the girl was left alone, and her father continued his walk around the house. A moment later she heard his voice raised in an angry key.

"Not another word," he was saying. "I will not listen."

"But Mr. Marquand," she heard Roy say.

"Enough," screamed the old man passionately; "are you not satisfied with the destruction you have caused!"

"But Joan," said the young man, quietly. "I must see Joan."

"You will never see Joan again!" cried the older man stormily.

"You will not allow me to explain?" questioned Roy.

"Your actions need no explanation, and if you ever show yourself around here again I'll shoot you down, you sneaking, pilfering impostor," blustered the old man.

Joan heard every word. She had known it before, but it was hard to hear the sentence embodied in words. Her breathing quickened, her courage rose to the call of the moment. A few steps, and she turned the corner of the house, and faced Roy.

"Joan!" he cried in thrilling tones, and sprang the brief step between them.

Her white, terrified face turned to him in the bright sunlight. He saw her eyes, and seeing, he fell back in mute wonder, frozen by their expression. Without a word, she passed into the cottage. With the dazed look of a man who has received a death sentence, Roy walked heavily away.

The next morning Joan received a letter from Roy; and the last faint light of hope flickered out of her heart, as she read the following:

My dearest Joan:—I am so sorry for the trouble that has come between us. If you would only listen to me, perhaps some of it could be explained away, and I might not appear so bad as you think. I know everything is against me, and I was crazy to think that I am half worthy of you. But if you will forgive anything I have done, Joan dear, and trust me for the future, I will never again give you cause for regret. I shall only exist until I hear from you.

Hopefully and fearfully, ROY.

The artist waited several days, but no answer came to his letter. Nor could he get a glimpse of Joan in any of his walks. The girl never seemed to leave the house. Roy harassed his brain for an answer to the question that haunted him.

"What had he done to offend the Marquands?"

He could have understood Joan. Girls are allowed to have moods. But Mr. Marquand's complete estrangement—and his words—heavens!—were inconceivable. The young man's face flushed as he thought how he would have dealt with a younger man who was not Joan's father, if he had dared to address him in such terms.

The artist decided to return to the city, so that Joan would be able to roam at will, as she had done before the trouble came. He looked very anxious and worn as he left his pretty cottage, suitcase in hand. And Joan noticed from her window as he passed to the station, his usual easy slouch was now a tired, dejected walk.

## CHAPTER IV.

## THE ANGUISH OF SUSPENSE.

After Roy went away, for days and days, Joan waited and watched. Not that she did this perceptibly, or hardly consciously. She never neglected her household duties to look out of doors or windows to see if anybody were coming. She took care of her father, performing all those loving attentions of a daughter so expressive of her affection. She arranged his tie and brushed his hat and coat before he went for his walk; she helped to take off his rubbers when he came in from the rain; and then she assisted him in gathering the big juicy pears that grew in the orchard at the back of the house; she occupied every bit of her time more fully than ever before. Yet she found time to dance to the old musician's playing every night. But her movements lacked the old fire and enthusiasm. And she was always glad when night came, and she could be alone with her thoughts, not even stopping to think what it was she wanted, or that she expected anything at all.

Yet each night as she sat at her window and listened to the katydids singing in the maples, away down in her secret heart, no matter how she tried to stifle its whispers, there was a disappointment.

"He did not come, but he surely will."

She could not think he would let it all end here, that he had taken her coldness and anger as final. And her cheeks burned as she confessed to herself that perhaps had she given him an opportunity, some of the trouble, as he told her in the letter, could be cleared away. She could not persuade herself that he was guilty, or that she had not been unjust.

A week passed, and what she hoped for came not. A dull aching gathered about her heart, her steps became listless, and her eyes sorrowful. It was a little more than a week since Roy went away, and she was standing in the dusk of the evening, resting languidly against a large tree. She was thinking of the expression on Roy's face and the appeal in his voice that morning when she sent him away without a hearing. Could it be that the words rushing to his lips would have explained? And then she threw back her head. If he could explain, he would not give up so easily. "I wouldn't if I were a man," she murmured. Then with a quick movement she began to walk impatiently up and down the gravel path beneath the maples.

Her father coming in from his evening walk remonstrated in tender tones about the dampness; and the katydids were louder and more mocking than ever. The curl came out of her hair; her pretty dress was limp, and Joan was about to turn sadly into the house when a man's figure came into view. Her heart beat fast as she strained her eyes in the gathering darkness. Was he coming at last? She nerved herself for the interview, for she was resolved to know all, and then if necessary take up her cross and carry it alone to the end. "Better that," she thought, "than to grow old and never know."

Yes, she would listen, she would see him alone. She would—— But never mind what Joan would have done. The figure by this time had reached the spot where she stood. But it was the postmaster going home. As he passed he handed her a special delivery letter.

She hurried into the cottage, and reaching her room, with trembling hands and beating heart, tore open the envelope. With a sense of overwhelming disaster she read, in Roy's handwriting:

Dearest Joan:—I am ill in mind and body. I have done nothing to forfeit my claim on you as your betrothed. Please come to me at once, before it is too late.

Yours forever, ROY.

With tears coursing down her cheeks, she heaped reproaches upon herself as she stood with the letter tighly grasped in her hand, feeling powerless to comfort him or even go to him.

"Oh, what have I done?" moaned Joan, as she thought of all the hopes she had lately held so dear—all the visions of love and a new life. And now everything was so empty; and the beautiful country that Joan had always loved looked to the forlorn girl like an arid wilderness without Roy.

An hour went by, and still she stood stupefied by the blow that had shattered her hopes. Her father, missing his usual "good night," came in with curious eyes. When he heard the cause of Joan's anxiety he was deeply distressed. She saw that it was only on her account. He still believed the worst of Roy, and would accept no extenuating circumstances. But the old man sat by Joan's side, smoothing her hands and comforting her.

"We all have our hour of sorrow," he said, in trembling tones. "You are passing through a severe test, but you are my child and a brave girl."

She lifted her tear-stained face as her father rose. "You ought to be in bed by this time," he said, embracing her fondly, and bidding her "good night."

Joan heard his door close, and stood by the open window, looking out into the silent night. Not a sound came from the moonlit country except the croaking of frogs and the gentle rustle of leaves.

All at once, as though some one were whispering breathlessly, she heard the

### Get This for Colds

**Prescription for Positive Results**
**Don't Experiment.**

"From your druggist get two ounces of Glycerine and half an ounce of Concentrated Pine Compound. Take these two ingredients home and put them into a half pint of good whiskey. Shake well. Take one to two teaspoonfuls after each meal and at bed time. Smaller doses to children according to age." This is said to be the quickest cough and cold cure known to the medical profession. Be sure to get only the genuine (Globe) Concentrated Pine. Each half ounce bottle comes in a tin screw-top sealed case. If your druggist is out of stock he will quickly get it from his wholesale house. Don't fool with uncertain mixtures. It is risky. Local druggists say that for the past six years this has had a wonderful demand.

* * *

### An Incompetent Valet.

Miss Highupp—So you have discharged your valet?

Mr. De Chappie—Ya's. Last Sunday the dull fellaw couldn't think up any new excuse foh my staying away from church.

* * *

### IT CURES RHEUMATISM

**A Kansas City Man Who Discovered a Simple Prescription That Cures Rheumatism Makes a Liberal Offer.**

Mr. H. Lee, a chemist, located at 829 A East Fifteenth St., Kansas City, Mo., discovered a simple preparation that cures any form of Rheumatism. Mr. Lee said: "A friend of mine who had a very bad case of Rheumatism tried this preparation and was completely cured. Hundreds of people here in the city began to call on me about it, and hundreds of people have been cured by it. Now I am receiving many letters from people all over the country who want to know about it. I will gladly give anyone information who writes me."

Anyone troubled with Rheumatism should write for this information as it is sent free.

* * *

### Just Missed.

"Your machine is missing."

"You're foolish; the engine isn't skipping."

"Well, you just missed that girl."

* * *

### *To Develop the Bust*

To Beauty Editor: I am so ashamed of my thin bust that I want to ask you if there is any harmless way to develop it. My hips and the rest of my body are right for the present styles and I do not want them any larger, but my bust is so flat that I would try anything that gave hope of even three or four more inches development. MARY S.

The only thing I know of that will develop the bust without increasing the size of the hips, or without putting on flesh where not needed, is a prescription put up by The Dr. Kelly Co., especially for small and undeveloped breasts. It is the discovery of a woman physician whose practice was largely among her own sex and in most cases increases the bust measure four to six inches in a month. Send 10c to the Dr. Kelly Co., Dept. 92 AB, Buffalo, N. Y., and they will send you a trial package of the treatment without charge. This is said to be of great value in cases of arrested development of the bust and will give a full, beautiful form without anyone knowing that the treatment was used.

Many mothers have told me that after the baby had been weaned, the breasts became flabby and shrunken, but the use of Dr. Kelly's prescription made them full and firm. Do not use pads or bust forms, as they never look natural and have a bad effect upon the general health. Neither would I recommend ordinary flesh builders or tonics, as they increase the hips and limbs and with the present styles the form should be slender everywhere except a generously developed bust.

* * *

### What He Wanted.

Clerk—Do you want a thin man's comb?

Customer (gravely)—No; I want a comb for a stout man with rubber teeth.

* * *

### CHANCES TO MAKE MONEY.

I have just returned from a six weeks' trip through Northwestern States and Canada, spent investigating the fruit industries and resulting profits. The apples, etc., are magnificent, but the prices of land ridiculous; $200 to $300 per acre for unimproved land, under ditch. Why, you can get land in Mexico better than any I saw on my trip absolutely free. All you have to do is to have five acres of bananas planted within five years. For particulars regarding Mexican Free Land, (printed in English) address The Jantha Plantation Co., Block 904, Pittsburgh, Pa. You can have the bananas planted without going to Mexico, and cared for on shares, and your share should be about $200 per acre. Bananas begin bearing in from 12 to 15 months. Why pay $200 an acre, when you can get better land free?

* * *

Ever notice the smiles of pity old married folks generate at weddings?

* * *

### LADIES, PRESERVE YOUR YOUTHFUL APPEARANCE.

Madame Mignette's Beauty Cream and Skin Food removes every defect, spot, freckle, pimple, blemish or wrinkle, leaving the skin soft, clear and smooth. It is perfectly harmless and will not injure the most delicate skin. It preserves and brings back the youthful glow to the face and ruddiness to the cheeks, preserving it in this condition until extreme old age. This preparation has been used for years, and hundreds are now using it and are more than delighted with the results. Send us ten (10) cents for formula which you can have filled at any drug store at a very, small cost. Do not delay, but write at once. Box 491, Blairsville, Pa.

words like a wave in the wind: "Love is above everything—love is above everything." The girl shuddered and closed the window. She slept little, and the next morning was feverishly excited. She gave her father his breakfast, put his violin in its case, and made other preparations for a day's trip.

He was accustomed to go at regular intervals to visit an old friend, also a musician, who lived several miles from Bornton. The girl stood at the door and watched until he was out of sight.

As she was about to re-enter the cottage a messenger boy hurried up with a telegram addressed to Joan. It was another entreaty to the girl to come to the city to see Roy.

"Oh, my dear, my dear!" she murmured; and the same voice she had heard the night before as she stood at the window seemed to speak again, only this time in tantalizing whispers.

"Do not go; seek your own felicity, and never mind him. Leave him to the trouble you have brought upon him. Let him die, innocent though he is—by the cruel error of destiny. That's good brave, and worthy of you, Joan."

She had no faith in omens and signs, but some mysterious sense had been telling her things of which there was no testimony or proof. She put her hands over her ears, and still the voice, now in shrieking tones, cried: "You are wrong! He is innocent!"

The girl suffered in those few moments, but again her courage rose to the occasion. "I will go!" she cried, triumphantly. And shortly after Joan stepped noiselessly out of the cottage, intending to return soon after her father. She left a note with the telegram, explaining the purpose of her journey.

Dressed in a quiet tailored suit of blue cloth—for it was late in September—the girl looked very winsome. But there was a wonder in her eyes and a trembling about the mouth that showed how tense were the emotions of the girl as she took her ticket at Bornton, and a few minutes later boarded the train for New York.

Farewell, Joan! May God guide your steps as he has guided your heart!

### CHAPTER V.

### "FOR OUR MOTHER'S SAKE."

In a cozy three-room studio in the Gramercy Park district, Roy Lester sat gazing into space. He sighed heavily and passed one hand wearily over his forehead. Then he walked to an easel and began to prepare for work. As he did so a knock arrested his attention.

"Come in," he said, turning his eyes toward the door. Then he recoiled. 'You!" he exclaimed, as Rex shambled toward him.

The shadows of the room could not conceal the fact that Rex's appearance had altered for the worse, and that he was looking haggard and ill. Roy spoke to that effect.

"I wanted to see you," Rex replied, glancing around in an odd, furtive manner. This was followed by something muttered inarticulately; and then the newcomer remained silent.

"I am sorry to see you looking so ill," said Roy presently.

"Ill?" he exclaimed, with a harsh, bitter laugh. "I have been, but never mind. It does not matter to you what becomes of a miserable, low-lived fellow like myself."

"Don't talk so wildly, Rex; you are not well, I tell you. Why don't you leave New York for a change?" Roy asked.

But to his astonishment Rex turned on him like a wild beast.

"I'll not go away," he hissed. "You want to get rid of me. I suppose you have met some fine lady that you want to marry, and you wish to get the black sheep out of the way. Ha, ha!" he laughed savagely. "Wrote you for money, and you sent me a sermon when my wife and I were at starvation point. The next day I read in the papers how you had sold a picture for $1,800," and again he laughed hysterically.

Roy was unable to tell whether his brother was really ill or had been drinking.

"I sold that picture after I had written to you," the artist answered quietly.

"You lie!" shouted Rex, shaking his finger angrily into his brother's face.

"What do you mean? If you cannot control yourself, I must ask you to leave," Roy said, with grave displeasure.

"I mean what I say. You lie!" Rex reiterated, his voice rising to a hoarse cry.

Roy was now thoroughly incensed. He rose and stood before the half-crazed man in a threatening attitude. It was the first time he had ever upbraided his weak, unprincipled brother, and Rex was cowed and abashed as he listened.

"For sixteen years," declared Roy, sternly, "you have never earned an honest penny. I have supplied you with everything, from a pair of shoes to starting you in business. You have come to me for funds to marry; to bury your children; to get your wife back on the stage. I have paid your gambling debts; satisfied all sorts and conditions of creditors; saved you from disgrace—and worse," he added, meaningly. "And you," he went on, rigidly, "who have no sense of truth nor honor, have held me to the promise I made our mother on her deathbed that I would stand by you through weal or woe. I have never reproached you or turned a deaf ear to your appeals. Yet you not only requite me by continuing in your evil course, but you hate me, and I believe if it were in your power to injure me you would."

Rex started violently.

"Stop," he said, tremblingly. "I came to ask you to help me for the last time; but never mind, I will not trouble you again." He turned to leave the room.

Rex had tried so many schemes to work upon the feelings of his brother, that for a moment Roy was not sure but this was a new trick. Seeing that Rex was really going, he called him back.

"I will help you once more," he said firmly. "But it must be conditional." The other man looked up inquiringly. "You must leave New York."

"You seem very anxious to get rid of me," muttered Rex.

"And I will make you a regular allowance," went on Roy. "But just as soon as you return to the city or get into any more trouble, the remittance will cease, and you may work out your own redemption. Those are the terms. Do you accept?"

"It's easy to make conditions with a man when he is down and out," growled Rex.

"Will you agree to the arrangement?" asked Roy, resolutely.

"Since beggars cannot be choosers, yes," he said, suppressing another angry outburst.

"When you are ready to go, let me know," said the artist, turning once more to his easel and preparing to work.

Rex fumbled with his hat, and hesitated for a second as though there was something more he wished to say. But seeing Roy's indifference he turned abruptly to the door; and with a "so-long," hurried from the room.

He lost no time in getting home to his wife, in a miserable squalid tenement. She met him at the door, a good-looking woman, with an abundance of dark hair and piercing black eyes. She was only twenty-five and of a passionate, wilful temper. A disregard of the conventions and the niceties held so dear by women had left their effect on her countenance. A tired look about the mouth and eyes showed her to be a person whose life was a succession of stormy battles, fought only with the aid of a desperate woman's crafty wit.

With a daub of rouge on her cheeks and ugly curl-paper in her hair she looked fully thirty-five.

"Well!" she said, sharply, as her husband dropped dejectedly into the first chair.

"Oh, it's all right!" he replied. "But I wish I was through with Martell. My brother is willing to give me an allowance, and——"

"But wait," interrupted the woman. "As I understand it, this Martell is rich, and you have assisted him in one or two doubtful enterprises. Let him pay; we need the money."

"But," faltered Lester.

"But me no buts," she snapped. "It is too late to draw back, and you are not taking any risk. The girl will be here shortly, and I will manage her until your friend Martell arrives. Then our part in the adventure will be over. You will collect your fee from the millionaire; accept the allowance your brother offers—and there you are."

The speech and tone showed the complete domination of the woman. The man was plaster in her hands.

"Don't call Martell my friend," he said, savagely. "I hate him. He is cleverer than I am, and whatever deviltry he gets up to he is sure to implicate me."

"He can't if you don't do anything," answered his wife, grimly.

"That's just the point," said Lester lowering his voice and looking toward the door. "Did you hear footsteps?" he asked anxiously.

His wife hurried toward the door. Then she returned a moment later, shaking her head.

"There is no one," she said. "But come into the other room where you will be farthest from the door."

The small apartment, situated on the fifth floor, consisted of three small rooms running in a straight line. The door opened into a small kitchen and living-room. Adjoining that was a small bedroom. The third was larger than either of the others, with some pretensions to comfort and neatness. The couple withdrew to this room and continued the interrupted conversation.

"You see," began Lester, "it happened this way. I met Martell quite by accident at Bornton. He saw the resemblance to my brother, and there seemed to be some sort of a grudge between them. I suppose he thought he could use me. I was feeling pretty sore at the time. So, I dare say, I was easily approached, particularly when he said he wanted to break up a love affair."

"Why?" asked his wife, curiously. "He never came between you and a girl, did he? You told me I was the only woman you ever loved."

"That's right," assented her husband. "The only woman."

The stress on the last word escaped her, and for the moment he forgot everything except the child Edna, the only person he had ever really loved. And but for his brother's interference, in his weak selfishness, he would no doubt have destroyed the happiness of the innocent, confiding girl.

"Well?" inquired his wife, suspiciously.

"So," continued Lester. "The scheme was that I should impersonate my brother and enter the house of the girl's father ostensibly to commit burglary. When the old man recognized me—a part of the plan, of course—I was to get away without disclosing the deception. As no harm was to come to Roy, and I was to get a hundred dollars, I fell into the arrangement. It worked all right, and the love match was off. But as I told you before, this fiend Martell followed up the first move with this devilish stunt of decoying the girl. And Satan only knows what else he is designing."

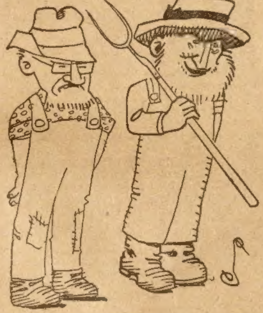
"Don't let your courage ooze out of your boots," said the woman, irritatingly. "He will have me to deal with as well as you; and I think between us we shall be a match for him."

"He is a deep one," said Lester, warningly.

"Never fear," replied his wife, confidently.

The conclusion of this remarkable story will be found in the Ledger issue of next week. If you are not a regular subscriber to the Ledger we would like to have your name on our list. The Ledger is only $1.00 per year, and we have stories awaiting publication that you cannot afford to miss.

* * *



"That new farmhand must have been a clerk before he came here."

"What makes you think so?"

"Whenever he stops work he always tries to put his pitchfork behind his ear."

* * *

## A Generous Clergyman.

It is related of the Reverend John Eliot, commonly called "the Apostle of the Indians" in the seventeenth century, that he would give to the redmen the most of his annual salary of fifty pounds as soon as he received it.

On one occasion the parish treasurer put the money into a handkerchief and tied it into as many hard knots as possible, to prevent the great preacher from giving it away before he reached home.

Calling soon after on a family suffering from illness and want, the famous dominie told them that God had sent them relief, and began to untie the handkerchief, but becoming impatient he handed it to the mother, saying:

"Take it, my dear; I believe the Lord designed it all for you."

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"I had no faith whatever, but on the advice of a hale, hearty old gentleman who spoke from experience, I began to use Grape-Nuts about 2 years ago," writes an Ohio woman, who says she is 40, is known to be fair, and admits that she is growing plump on the new diet.

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"For two years I have eaten Grape-Nuts food at least twice a day and I can now say that I have perfect health. I have taken no medicine in that time—Grape-Nuts has done it all. I can eat absolutely anything I wish, without stomach distress.

"I am a business woman and can walk my 2 or 3 miles a day and feel better for doing so. I have to use brains in my work, and it is remarkable how quick, alert and tireless my mental powers have become." Name given by Postum Co., Battle Creek, Mich.

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**Ever read the above letter? A new one appears from time to time. They are genuine, true, and full of human interest.**

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J. A. HOWLAND,
1734 Humboldt St.,
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State of Colorado, City and County of Denver, } ss.

Personally appeared before me, a Notary Public in and for the city and county of the State of Colorado, J. A. Howland, known to me as the person whose name is subscribed to the above statement and upon his oath declares that it is a true and correct statement.

DANIEL H. DRAPER,
Notary Public.

Letter to
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# MR. AND MRS. MOON

## TIMOTHY AND THE BLACK HAND

### By W. BERT FOSTER

[Copyright 1911 by W. D. Boyce Co.]

'TIS a habit ye have contracted, woman," declared Mr. Moon, gloomily. "Since ye had a silver weddin' an' been ter the Waldorf, ye've gone bug on society. It's pink tays ye'll be givin' a couple of times a week, I dunno? Not on my money, Mahala."

Mrs. Moon put a corner of her apron to her eye.

"Ye'll not take yer money with ye," 'Timothy Moon," she said, somewhat spitefully; "not where you're going!"

"I dunno," returned her husband, grinning wickedly. "Mebbe, by the time of my next demise, they may be printin' bank-notes on asbestos paper. We'll see. Howsomever, ye'll bur-rn little of what me Uncle Roderick left me, in givin' afternoon swor-ays an' the like. Sure, the smoke is offensive to me."

"It's just mean you are, Timothy Moon!" pursued the injured lady, her ample bosom heaving like the troubled ocean. "I've set me heart on givin' Mr. Barnes and his sweetheart a dacent bite and sup when they come 'way over here to see us. Miss Sally wants to thank ye for what ye did ter aid her in getting her diamonds back."

"I've little use for that gir-rl," growled Mr. Moon. "She'd had me pinched for stealin', if so she'd had her way."

"And she talked mighty pretty about how sorry she was, and about beggin' your pardon, Timmie, when she was here in her automobeel the other day," declared Mrs. Moon, growing happily reminiscent and forgetting to weep. "Ye should have seen the neighbors stare! She'll bring Mr. Barnes——"

"I hope he brings his dog," interrupted Mr. Moon. "If he does, we'll take it down to Riley's and set it onto his mutt."

"Then," said Mrs. Moon, quickly seizing the favorable moment, "you'll go around by Paolo Micheli's and tell him what we do be wantin' on Wednesday night?"

"Well, well!" grunted Timothy. "I may as well give in to ye. Mr. Robert Barnes is a dacent lad. But I'm not strong for this Dago Mike. Ye never know, if ye mix wit' them Eye-talians, when ye'll run up against a black hand bomb. They tell me that no wop ever makes money but the black hand begins ter bleed him. And this Dago Mike is putting on a lot of dog of late. They'll git him yet."

Timothy never claimed to be a seer, or the seventh son of a seventh son, but his words seemed, in this case, to be prophetic. Walking leisurely down the block and around the corner, Mr. Moon ran smack into more excitement than he looked for.

It was at an hour in the evening when the avenue was thronged. Children rioted in the street, or danced around a hurdy-gurdy that was being played near Micheli's store. Suddenly there was a dull detonation — an explosion that shocked the ear-drums dreadfully and sucked the glass out of near-by windows, the fragments falling in a shower on the walk and the heads of affrighted pedestrians. There was not much smoke. Timothy saw the plate-glass front of Paoli Micheli's shop crash outward. All that was left was the twisted iron framework.

The whole block was instantly a bedlam of screams. The populace told how scared it was in several different languages. But the most scared and most voluble was Paoli Micheli himself.

Out of the smudge of smoke misting the wrecked doorway of his store shot the little Italian—a man, at best, black of face and hairy as a monkey—his eyes wild, the whites gleaming in the soot that streaked his countenance. He fairly gibbered with fear as he catapulted himself into Timothy's arms.

"Oh, Signor Moon-a! sav-a me! I mak-a t' dead! Oh, oh!"

"Wow! Git off'n me, ye dirty wop!" roared Timothy, flinging the little man from him and hopping out of his reach. "Ye garlic-ateing son of a gun—phew! 'Tis no wonder ye was blowed up—with a breat' on ye like Lazarus' grave clo'es."

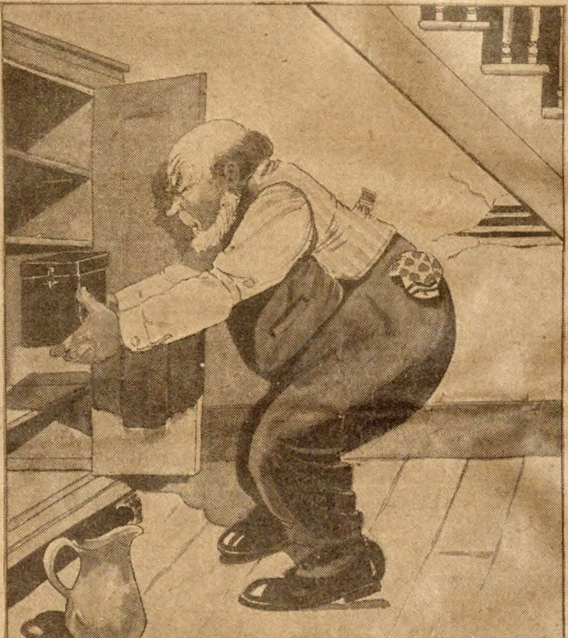
"Oh, Signor Moon-a!" sobbed the little caterer. "They haf mak-a me dead! They haf ruin' da shop! Dey spoil-a da trade!"

The tale of his woe could be heard two blocks, even above the general hullabaloo; but Timothy side-stepped any further demonstration. When the police came, the chattering Micheli admitted that he had received several threatening letters in his own language, and had been afraid to tell the authorities; nevertheless, he had not "come across" with the tax Camorra claimed; result: havoc!

"And the foolishness of him!" declared the philosophical Timothy, when discussing the outrage at Riley's. "If ye're a dago there's only wan way to get along wit' the black hand. Sure! If so be I'd been born a wop—if such a thing had been wished on me, for instance—I'd jine the black hand meself, and so be on the right side of the fince. 'Tis what Dago Mike sh'd do. Now, wherever he goes to fill a customer's order, a dinnimite bomb is likely ter be delivered in the freezer of ice cream, or rat-poison used ter flavor the cream-puffs. His business will be sp'iled intirely."

Nevertheless Mrs. Moon insisted upon having Paoli Micheli serve the refreshments that Wednesday evening when she "received" her two fashionable young friends from Murray Hill. Timothy could not frighten her with stories of black hand outrages.

"I'd about as lief have a trained monkey around th' house as that Micheli, anyway," grumbled Mr. Moon. "But now the black hand has marked him, he's just as dangerous as a dinnimite bomb himself. Mark me wor-rd, woman; he'll bring us trouble and sorra!"



He expected the thing to explode and blow him through the roof.

It wasn't fear that this prophecy would come true that kept Timothy at home instead of his going to work on the Blue Blazes on this certain Wednesday. It was a much more tangible matter than fear of the black hand, being nothing less than an attack of lumbago—Timothy called it "a misery in his back."

He hobbled around the house, groaning woefully, all morning, and was unable to get down to Riley's before noon, the "misery" held him in such leash. It was when returning from his first trip to the drink emporium that Timothy saw the man with the black bag.

Paolo Micheli's wagon stood at the door of 57 Kay street, for the caterer was delivering some of Mrs. Moon's order thus early. When Timothy pushed open the door there was a tall, shabbily dressed man, with a shabby black leather box in his hand, creeping along the lower hall toward the rear. In fact, when the old lighterman saw him first he was as far as Dr. Sharpe's door.

"What's this?" demanded Timothy, suspiciously. "Was ye lookin' for any wan?"

The man muttered something unintelligible, and hurriedly pushed by Mr. Moon to the street. The latter looked after him, shaking his head.

"Another wop—and a har-rd lookin' wan," he muttered. "What the divil, now, did he want in here?"

It was evening when Timothy came down again, bound for Riley's to buy his supper beer. As he reached the lower hall with the pitcher, in the half-darkness he saw a figure against the wall—again near the doctor's door.

Timothy struck a match and lit the hall gas. It was the same man with the same black bag.

"Now tell me," exclaimed Mr. Moon, very much ruffled, and getting briskly between the man and the street door, "who the divil are ye, and what do ye want?"

"I come see-a da doc'," stammered the fellow, hiding (or trying to hide) the black box behind his back.

"Well, why don't ye ring his bell, or knock on the dure like an honest man?" demanded the old bargeman.

"I did so," the stranger hastened to declare. "But he no answer."

"Then the doc ain't in. Beat it!" advised Timothy, still scowling, but making way for the man.

The Italian slid out, and Timothy, looking after him a moment later, found that he had disappeared with uncanny swiftness. He knocked at the door of the doctor's flat himself. It was true the physician did not answer. But Timothy remained suspicious.

Number 57 Kay street had seldom seen a more select company of guests, and Mrs. Moon was a proud woman indeed when the taxicab, bringing Mr. Robert Barnes and Miss Sally, drew up at the door.

There was but one disappointment. Miss Sally did not wear the famous necklace. Indeed, Mrs. Rudolph Greenabaum, the wife of the corner storekeeper, displayed so many "off color" brilliants that the stones in Miss Sally's engagement ring and the brooch at her throat were scarcely noticeable.

Beside the Greenabaums there were the McMasters (Old Mac kept decently sober with difficulty), Jinny and her husband, Bob and his wife, and the young doctor from below stairs—all invited to meet Mr. Barnes and Miss Sally.

Barnes was a man who accommodated himself to any company, and Miss Sally could not help but have her icy exterior thawed by the fire of Mrs. Moon's expansive hospitality.

It was along in the evening. The men had retired to the kitchen to smoke their pipes. Timothy seized the huge silver water-pitcher, winked at his male guests, and tiptoed out of the flat, bent upon a hospitable errand of his own.

And while he was descending the stairs, a figure flitted through the lower hall, and the street door banged. The light was keen enough, however, for Timothy to distinguish and identify the figure.

It was the tall foreigner whom he had already seen twice that day lurking in the hall. This time he had not carried the black box—at least, his hands had been empty when he hurried out of the tenement.

What had become of the black bag?

Suspicions that had merely floated hazily in Mr. Moon's mind suddenly were coagulated into a tangible belief. The

(Continued on page twenty-seven.)

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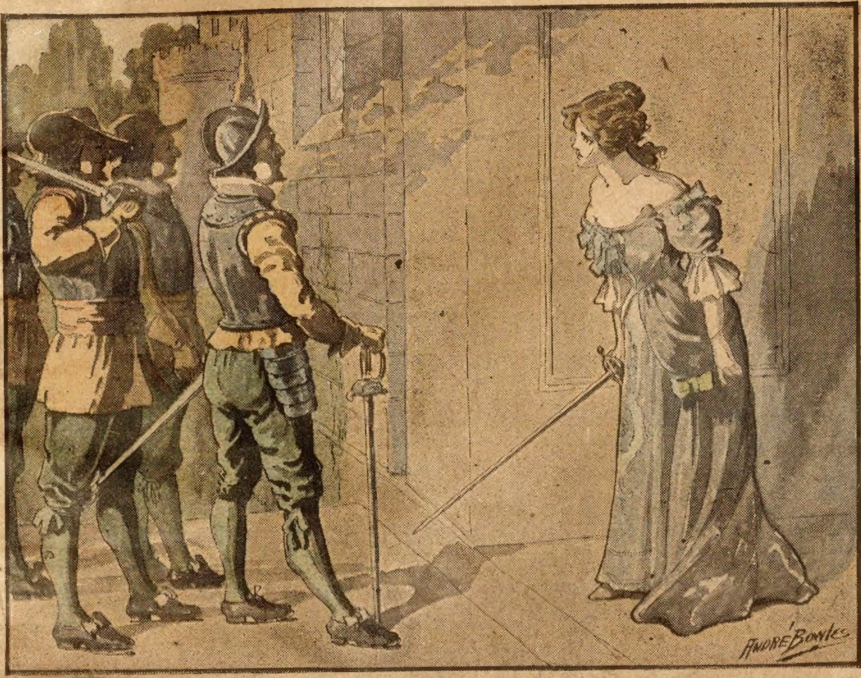
# THE QUEEN'S SIGNET;

## *Or, Lady Castlemain's Crime*

### By T. C. HARBAUGH



**"Where is Noel Neville?"**

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### CHAPTER V.

### HOW NOEL DESPOILED HARLE.

NOEL NEVILLE, Rosamond's lover, was resolved that Harle the Hawk should not long retain Queen Catherine's signet. After what Foy had told him in the Round Rose Bower he suspected that a dark conspiracy was afoot to disgrace the Queen. The maid of honor had refused to disclose by whose authority she had placed the ring in Hyde Park, where it was to be picked up and thus give the conspirators an opportunity to carry out their fell designs.

He could suspect, but he had no proof. Her majesty had avoided all cabals, but Charles was surrounded by a lot of court favorites who stood ready to carry out any plot which would rid them of the Queen's presence.

Noel was well acquainted with the haunts of Harle, and eager to despoil that worthy of his prize before he could make use of it to his advantage, on the night after his interview with Foy he made his way thither.

Hounslow Heath was one of the favorite robbing grounds of the laced highwayman. It was some miles from the palace of Whitehall, but Noel was well mounted, and as he galloped over the road, lighted here and there by the beams of a crescent moon, he felt amply able to match Harle in all his sword tricks.

The houses grew scarcer as he advanced, and finally he had passed beyond the last one and was in the real country. Halting under the spreading boughs of a lordly oak he began his vigils.

He doubted not that Harle was gloating over his rich find in Hyde Park, and mayhap had already perfected his plans, which, if carried out, would not only gain new notoriety, but would compromise Catherine beyond recall.

It was a night for sounds and echoes. The air was clear and crisp, and the slightest noise on the heath came readily to the watcher's ears. For two long hours did Noel and his horse remain like statues under the oak.

A calash went by, moving toward the city proper, and Noel caught the sound of merry laughter inside.

At length the silence was broken by the distinct sound of hoofs. A lone horse was coming forward at a smart gallop, and Rosamond's lover leaned forward and looked up the heath. Was it Harle?

There was something in the measured hoofbeats that convinced him that the animal was a trained one, and all London knew that Mercury, as the gay cutpurse called his steed, was the best horse in the realm.

Instead of drawing his pistol, Noel unsheathed his sword and held his breath. A few seconds would tell the tale.

Almost suddenly the figure of the galloping animal loomed between him and the moon, and he uttered a cry as he saw the man in the saddle. The light showed him the loose doublet with its silver lace and the jaunty hat with its silken feather.

At once Noel put his blade in readiness, and then bolted into the road.

"Stand!" cried he.

There was a quick cry of alarm, a sudden tugging at the bridle rein, and he was face to face with the finder of the Queen's signet.

Harle, the Hawk was as quick as a cat. His blade was out in an instant, but he was deftly forestalled by his young adversary, whose steel shot forward like an arrow and almost touched his throat above the scarlet collar.

"Yield!" said Noel. "I have you at point, Master Harle. Raise your blade, and I'll bury mine in your heart!"

For once the face of the highwayman was not masked, and Noel saw it whiten from forehead to chin.

"What means this?" demanded Harle, catching his breath. "You are playing a desperate game, I vow."

"Not half so desperate a one as you have played to the sorrow of England," responded Noel, abating none of his vigilance. "I don't want your purse. You can spend its contents at the Lion and Stag where you meet Captain Brass."

"Ho! you are lenient," smiled the cutpurse. "If you want not my wealth, what can I deliver?"

"That which you have concealed in your doublet. I'll take Queen Catherine's signet."

At this Harle recoiled in his saddle, and his sword moved upward, but instantly he felt the point of Noel's blade against his breast.

"The ring or your life!" came through Noel's clenched teeth, and his manner showed Harle that he dared not play fast and loose with his foe.

"Who told you I possess the seal ring?" he asked.

"Who? I have seen it in your possession. You found it in Hyde Park."

"And pray, what would you with it?"

"Never mind, Harle. Which shall it be, ring or heart. I give you your choice."

Noel saw the highwayman bite his lip.

"You'd make a good gentleman of the road," suddenly laughed Harle. "Why don't you go into the business? It pays when lords and ladies ride over Hounslow Heath."

"I'm no robber like yourself."

"No, but you'd make a good one. By the way, what is your title?"

Noel, who did not care to reveal his identity at present, made no reply.

"Quick!" he cried, impatiently. "I cannot tarry here all night fencing with you."

At that moment Harle spoke quickly to his horse, and perchance he might have touched his flank with the spur, for Mercury suddenly forged backward, and Noel saw Harle's blade flash in his face.

"A game two can play at, sirrah!" laughed Harle over his cunning trick. "Come on, my good fellow."

Noel at once accepted the challenge. He was not to be browbeaten by a common robber. Like a bolt from a catapult he lunged forward, and the two swords met in the moonlight.

Not a word was spoken now. Harle was an expert swordsman, as more than one titled gentleman could say to his chagrin, but he soon found that he was opposed by an arm as quick and skilful as his own.

It was give and take for several minutes. Sparks leaped from the two blades like those from a blacksmith's anvil. The air rang with the combat. Now Noel had his steel at the fellow's throat, and now it was swept aside and he had to defend his breast with all the skill he knew.

"The signet!" cried he, as he suddenly swept Harle's sword aside and pressed his own against the velvet doublet. "Queen Catherine's ring, or a grave for you, Harle, on the heath!"

The cry was met with a curse, and Harle attempted to play one of his secret sword feints, which had more than once won victory on the road. This time it proved worthless. As he essayed the play which he believed would bring Noel from his horse, the stroke was parried, and the next second Noel's steel was lost in the highwayman's bosom.

There was a sudden cry, a tottering in the saddle, and Mercury was riderless.

Noel dismounted and bent over his adversary. There was blood on the white lace of the famous doublet, there was blood on its owner's lips, and the hand had dropped the sword.

Noel tore open the front of the doublet. His hand leaped into the opening, and his fingers clutched a little packet, which he jerked out with a cry.

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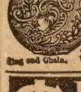

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prize into the depths of his pocket, where he knew it would be safe, Noel looked once more at the figure in the road.

Life remained. He lifted Harle from the ground, and looked to the gash his steel had made.

"You're good for more tricks of the road," he said, in reply to Harle's glance. "I didn't want your life. I cared for nothing but the Queen's signet."

"You fight well," exclaimed Harle the Hawk. "I'd like to take the road with you."

Noel carried Harle to his horse and placed him in the saddle.

"Good night," said he. "I have spared that which London would like to take—your life. No thanks, Harle. If ever you seek combat in London, ask for Noel Neville of Audrey Chase."

With this Rosamond's lover touched his hat to the beaten man, and sprang to saddle.

He looked back but once, and saw a horse moving slowly in the direction from which Harle had come. Then he touched his own steed with the spur, and was off toward the lights of London.

He had accomplished his purpose. He had found the Queen's signet, and he would place it in her hands himself. He laughed when he thought of his victory, and when he rode past Whitehall, he wondered what was taking place within its walls. He set the following day as the time when he could gladden the heart of Catherine of Braganza.

### CHAPTER VI.

### THE VIPER STINGS.

It was one of the clock, the day after Noel's adventure on Hounslow Heath, when my Lord Buckingham rushed into Lady Castlemain's presence and announced that the Queen's signet had come back.

The face of the favorite purpled with rage. A costly Sevres vase which she held in her hands fell to the floor, where it was shattered into countless pieces.

"You lie, Buckingham!" she cried, forgetting herself.

"I'll admit, your grace, that I sometimes skimp the truth, but on this occasion I stick closely to it."

"Who fetched it back?" demanded the woman.

"A young gallant named Noel Neville."

"I know him not," said Arabella thoughtfully. "But where did he get the ring?"

"The Countess of March was present when he delivered it to her majesty, and she says he told the Queen that he got it on the road. If he told her more, I am not informed."

Lady Castlemain spurned some of the pieces of the vase with her foot and looked up at Buckingham.

"Tell me something of this signet finder," said she.

"He is master of Audrey Chase. The Nevilles have had much to do with England's history. One of the family fell at Naseby whilst beating back Cromwell's fanatics. All the Nevilles are good swordsmen, and it is said that this one, Noel, is an adept in that line."

"Where could he have found the ring?" soliloquized the favorite aloud. "On the road, he said?"

"So March informs me?"

"Then who picked it up in Hyde Park? Not he, of course."

"No," answered the courtier; "he must have despoiled the person who found it."

"Was Catherine delighted?"

"She was overjoyed, and 'tis said she will knight Noel Neville."

"Never!" exclaimed Catherine, stamping her foot. "I will see to that, Buckingham. Think you I have exhausted my powers? If you do, you do not know the Duchess of Cleveland."

A haughty toss of the head accompanied these words, and both were silent for a moment.

"Look ye, Buckingham," the woman suddenly cried, advancing upon him. "I want the iron doors of the Bloody Tower to close upon this meddler. You will aid me?"

"As if the King's favorite needs assistance!" smiled the Duke.

"It is a momentary triumph for the Portuguese jade," flashed Lady Castlemain. "I have not been betrayed! No, no! The wrong person found the signet, that is all. The King rules England, but I rule Charles!"

Buckingham knew this. More than half a million wrung from the people of England had gone into the coffers of this plotting woman. She was splendid at all times, but never so grand as when she was in a tower of passion.

"Listen, Buckingham," she said, turning again upon him. "I shall strike the meddler first, and then the Queen. He must have a love."

"'Tis said he is affianced to one Rosamond Temple who dwells at the end of Rosemary street."

"Know ye her?"

"I have seen her but once, and that was at the flower fete last summer, where she attracted the attention of the King."

Lady Castlemain colored again.

"The more reason why I should hate her!" she exclaimed. "A doll-faced wench, I vow."

"She was quite becoming on that occasion," confirmed the Duke.

"Enough!"

Lady Arabella held out her hand for Buckingham to kiss, and in another moment she was alone.

It was not long before the whole place knew that Catherine was happy again. The loss of the signet had greatly troubled her, for she had seen that the King was likely to associate some tryst with its disappearance, but now that it had come back, she could show it to his majesty and boldly face those who were plotting against her.

Lady Castlemain was not one who halted when on the road to vengeance. Her hand was swift, her heart unforgiving, and she saw in the return of the ring merely a temporary defeat.

Before nightfall she had four visitors in her chambers. To one of these men she handed a paper which caused a little start as all read it in silence. It was nothing less than an order for the arrest of Noel Neville.

"You will secure the arrest of this person before morning," she said. "More than this. You will search Audrey Chase and see if there are not compromising papers within its walls. You will conduct him through the traitor's gate into the Tower, and hand him over to the lieutenant. When you have done so, you will go to Temple House and place a guard there."

The minions nodded and went away.

"Who shall say that the vengeance of Castlemain is not that of the robbed tigress?" she exclaimed, as the last footfalls sounded in her ears.

Night fell over the city of London. Gliding down the dimly lighted street, with outbursts of laughter, went the sworded quartet in the pay of the King's favorite.

Noel, alone in his chambers, heard the clang of the outer alarm and rose to his feet. As he turned to the door, he picked up his sword which lay on the table and went down the staircase. He was met by a servitor in the lower hall. The man's face was white.

"Who knocks, Morton?" asked the young man.

"Four men of the royal guard," was the reply.

Noel seemed to divine the situation in a flash. He had fallen under the displeasure of the Queen's enemies. He laid his hand on the heavy chain which secured the door and hesitated.

"They are fierce-looking varlets," said Morton, with a glance at his master.

"Lions or lambs, we shall look at them."

Noel unbarred the entrance and opened the door. A lamp which hung in the hallway cast an arrow of light oustide.

"What want ye?" he demanded, keeping one hand on the hilt of his sword.

"We would have a word with Noel Neville," answered the foremost minion, setting his booted foot across the threshold.

"Whence come ye?"

"From Whitehall Palace."

"On what errand, pray?"

"We are commissioned to arrest you."

Noel's face went white, and Morton uttered a startled cry. All his blood seemed to surge like ocean waves into his brain. He stepped back and flung the door in the fellow's faces. Then he turned to Morton and looked as it were into the depths of his soul.

"Villainy is afoot!" said he. "This is the sting of the palace viper."

Something like the butt of a pistol struck the heavy oaken panel of the door.

"Morton," said Noel, "run back and get your blade. A man's house is his castle at all times."

"But the King's order, master?"

"It is Charles' command at the beck of his favorite," was the reply. "Your sword, Morton."

Morton shot down the corridor and vanished. When he came back he carried a sword, the blade of which was as white as his bloodless face.

"Open the door!" commanded Noel of Audrey Chase.

The servant obeyed, and when the four again beheld Noel, they saw also a man with a sword in his right hand.

"Tell your mistress that Noel Neville refuses to obey the summons which emanates from her heart."

The men looked at one another nonplused.

"What," cried one, "do you refuse to obey the King's command?"

"I refuse."

Noel was swinging the door upon them once more, when the foremost, who was a veritable giant, lunged against it. He was inside before the young gallant could stop him. The others were at his heels. Quick as a flash leaped forward the sword which Noel gripped with determination, and its point was lost in the bosom of the first varlet. As the man fell backward, he bore his companions before him, but the repulse was but momentary. They recovered and came forward. Morton got in a stroke at one of the four, and sent him back with a bleeding poll. Noel thrust out again, and the third toppled over the stoop.

Then, throwing out his hand, he gripped the last fellow by the throat and flung him clear of the stones. It was all over in three seconds.

The door shot into its accustomed place, and Neville looked at Morton with a smile.

"First blood for the House of Neville!" said he, as he bolted the portal, and then he went along the corridor wiping some flecks of gore from his steel.

### CHAPTER VII.

The young master of Audrey Chase felt

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that he was just getting into the toils of the designer, Castlemain, when he turned from the scene of the combat in the hall. Not only this, but he believed that her spies would ferret out his engagement to Rosamond, and seek to take out a portion of their revenge upon her.

To this end, in order to put Rosamond on her guard, he hastened to Rosemary street, as soon as possible, and knocked at his fiancee's door.

Startled by the sight of him, the fair one waited eagerly for explanations, and Noel forthwith told the story of his adventures in connection with Queen Catherine's signet. Rosamond listened with bated breath and with alarm pictured on her ashen face.

"They will not give up the hunt till you are in Lady Castlemain's hands!" she exclaimed. "All London knows of her hatred for the Queen, and a large part of it shares her aversion."

"That is true," Noel responded. "Catherine cannot influence the King when that woman has his ear."

"You might retire for a time——"

Noel stopped her with an uplifted hand.

"And leave you to feel the ire of the Red Duchess?" he exclaimed. "I cannot think of this for a moment. I shall remain in London and face the cabal."

"And reach the Tower through the traitor's gate?"

"Better men than I have passed that accursed portal."

"And many of them are there yet," said Rosamond, fearsomely.

Noel took several turns about the room, and then came back to the watching girl.

"I have this!" cried he, touching his sword. "It has drawn blood tonight, and my hand knows how to send it home."

An hour passed.

Suddenly a heavy knock sounded on their ears, and Noel sprang up and drew his blade.

"The wolves are still on your trail!" cried Rosamond.

He would have crossed the carpet, intent on having it out with the foe, but Rosamond drew him back.

"Let me face them," she said with resolution.

A glow of pride filled his eyes as he saw her take down a rapier from the wall and run her fair white hand along the blade.

"You taught me how to use this, Noel," she cried with a glance in his direction. "I trust I have been an apt pupil."

She gently flung him off as she quitted the chamber, and he heard the patter of her feet on the staircase. He yearned to follow her, but her last look forbade, and so he waited in silence.

Rosamond descended the stair and stopped near the door, her face tensely drawn, and her hand grasping the hilt of the rapier. In the soft light which flooded the scene she looked more beautiful than ever, and could Noel have seen her then he would have thought her far lovelier than all the beauties of the realm.

There was a mutter of voices outside, and the girl leaned forward and listened.

"Open in the King's name!" came the demand in a coarse voice.

The girl did not speak.

"Open ere we force the door!"

Her hand went out and grasped the brass key, but she did not turn it.

Noel had opened the door overhead, and heard the harsh demand which sent his blood tingling through every vein.

"You dare not defy the royal command, miss," he heard. "It may be worth your liberty to do so."

"And you dare not enter without my permission."

How soft yet firm was Rosamond's voice!

"Dare not?" raucously laughed some one. "Bolts and bars cannot keep back the servants of his majesty."

Noel saw his love retreat a pace, but she suddenly came back to the door. In another moment she seemed to change her mind, for she bounded up the stair and came face to face with him.

"They are down there!" she cried. "I cannot tell how many."

"The minions of Castlemain," answered Noel, through set teeth.

"I doubt it not, Noel. There is a back way unguarded, perchance. You must fly!"

"And leave you to the tender mercies of the plotters?"

"I am not defenseless. Quick! No time is to be lost. You know London as you know your own house. You must go!" and she seized his arm and pushed him across the hallway.

There was much of argument in what Rosamond had said. He hesitated, but she was obdurate.

"As you love me, Noel, you must go," she repeated. "The vengeance of this court Jezebel cannot reach me."

He was at a little door almost before he knew it. As he went down a flight of narrow steps he cursed himself for a coward, and longed to go back and rejoin Rosamond."

The back entrance to Temple House was not guarded, and the cool air of night touched his cheek. He made his way through a garden and vaulted over a fence, alighting beyond, where the grass was soft and rather long.

Rosamond went back to the lower door and bent toward it.

"Shall we wait all night on your whim, girl?" came the demand from the same varlet who had already spoken.

The girl unfastened the brass chain and turned the key in the lock. Six ruffians wearing court livery faced her. They regarded her in silence a moment, and then shifted their leering gaze one to the other.

"What is it?" asked Rosamond, in tones that were the acme of clever coolness.

She had backed against the wall, and her hand still gripped the rapier's hilt.

"Where is he? Where is Noel Neville?"

"This is not his house," she said. "This is Temple House, and I am its mistress."

"No one doubts that, miss. But where is Noel Neville?"

"Gentlemen," and she flushed as she spoke the word, "the house is before you. If you come in the King's name, you have the rooms for your hunting ground."

"God's mercy; but we'll use them as such," laughed the leading ruffian. "Come, my hawks. We'll ransack this dovecote and find what we may."

Rosamond remained like a statue where she stood and saw the band rush into the nearest room. They were not gentle in anything they did. She heard them displacing rich furniture, scattering fauteuils and tabourets about the room, until her blood seemed fire in her gentle veins.

Presently they came out and trooped up the stairs. Their heavy boots tore the carpet of the steps, and their swords slashed at the painted walls. All at once she sprang after them. Darting past the mad band, she reached the door of her private chamber, where she stopped and turned with ashen face and flashing eyes.

"He may be hidden in my lady's boudoir—a pretty cage for a traitorous bird!" cried the captain of the band, as he halted before the girl.

Rosamond opened the door and pointed inside. A light burning on a gorgeous dresser illuminated the entire room.

"You may look inside," she said, gazing straight into the ravenous eyes before her. "It is sacred, and your feet shall not profane it."

"Prithee, miss the rascal may be hidden under your couch."

The girl's cheeks instantly colored. She placed her rapier across the door, and held back the dark-faced louts.

"Come, my beauty. We must inspect the chamber," argued the leader. "It is the King's command——"

"Nay!" interrupted Rosamond. "It is the command of the jade who rules his most gracious majesty. But for Lady Castlemain you would not be here tonight," and then she paled a little as she thought of what might be the consequences to her if her words were reported to the Red Duchess, as Arabella was sometimes called.

The fellows were insistent, but suddenly stepping across the threshold, she placed the point of the rapier against the foremost man's breast.

"The rose hath a thorn, Jason," laughed one of the men at the leader's back.

"More than a thorn as you may discover," responded the girl, and the fellow, feeling the prick of the steel, recoiled and let out an oath.

He saw the look which backed up the long bright blade, and turned suddenly to his companions.

"There's nothing in the boudoir," said he. "We'll ransack the balance of the trap."

From room to room they went slashing everywhere, and even running their swords through fine tapestries in their ire. At last they all trooped down the stair, and Rosamond, leaning over the banisters, watched them in the lower hall with a smile on her face.

She did not move until the last varlet had vanished, and then she flew down the steps and shot the bolt with an emphasis which told how glad she was to get rid of Lady Castlemain's minons.

### CHAPTER VIII.

### HARLE TRICKS THE RED DUCHESS.

The rage of Lady Castlemain was boundless when she learned that her prey had escaped her. The King knew nothing of her attempt to secure the person of Noel Neville, for he had placed in her hands a number of blank commitments to the Tower, and she had but to fill in the names of her enemies and the grim doors of the the terrible prison would open at once.

Noel must not be permitted to escape her vengeance, and she forthwith sent Buckingham to the search. As for Rosamond, she had incurred the hatred of the favorite, and stood in the shadow of the Tower.

Meantime Captain Brass had received a message from the heath, and had posted hither to find Harle the Hawk lying on a cot nursing the hurt he had received at Neville's hands. Noel, in his ire, had aimed well enough, but his steel had been deflected underneath Harle's doublet, and instead of a fatal wound, one of little real moment had been inflicted. The highwayman received Captain Brass with a broad grin.

"There are good swordsmen besides ourselves, Captain," he laughed. "I wot that Noel Neville of Audrey Chase thinks he has cleared the road of Harle."

Captain Brass was fertile in questions.

"Nay," said Harle, laying his hand on the Captain's sleeve; "I rather like Noel's spirit. He came at me like a whirlwind, and was my match—something I rarely find nowadays."

"You will pay him back!" said Brass. "The next time the butter will be on the other side of the bread."

Harle paid no attention to these words.

(Continued on page nineteem)

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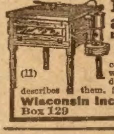

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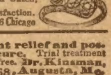

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# Chicago Ledger

Entered as second-class matter June 25, 1885, at the postoffice at Chicago, Illinois, under act of March 3, 1879.

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Advertising rate $2.25 per Agate Line, per insertion, for advertisements in The Chicago Ledger and The Saturday Blade combined. These two weeklies have an average circulation of

1,000,000
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## GENTLE JABS.

Many a true word is spoken by mistake.

But the ready tongue is seldom ready to stop.

Riches have wings; poverty is lucky if it has shoes.

An egg in the hand is worth two in the grocery.

Women always look on the bright side of mirrors.

The man who knows himself will not judge others harshly.

It's almost as bad to say mean things as it is to do them.

When you see bad luck coming your way, dodge up an alley.

The stars wait until the night falls before they begin to shoot.

The wise guy never jolts a hornet's nest to find out what's in it.

Nearly every business proposition looks like a sure winner—on paper.

Unless you are very rich you cannot afford to have things given to you.

Hope is synonymous with the wag of a dog's tail when he is waiting for a bone.

The best way to induce people to respect your advice is to keep it to yourself.

No girl is qualified for matrimony until she knows how to spank a baby properly.

An old bachelor says the nice thing about getting married is that you don't have to.

Many a woman never knows what she wants until she discovers what her husband does not want.

Some history repeats itself, but your own private history is apt to be repeated by your neighbors.

Perhaps a man has more temptations than a woman because he knows just where to look for them.

A woman has to have a lot of faith to believe that her husband never thinks of any woman but her.

Ask any spinster why she never married, and she will freely admit that it wasn't because she never had an opportunity.

Many a good woman, who wouldn't think of using her religion as a cloak, stays away from church because she can't afford a new coat.

# PICKLED PEPPERS

### His Courage Failed.

Quanah Parker, chief of the Comanche Indians, who died some weeks ago, enjoyed the reputation of being the wittiest man of his race. He was likewise a man of affairs and something of a lobbyist. He had appeared before the Committee of Indian Affairs regularly for years, and the members of that committee had become intimately acquainted with him.

Two or three years ago Uncle Sam issued a mandate to the effect that the Indians in the future should take unto themselves but one wife. Quanah, appearing before the committee, told its members that many of the men of his tribe had more than one wife. He was admonished to go home and tell them that this condition of affairs could no longer exist, and that the surplus wives must be sent home to their parents.

Last session Parker again appeared before the committee and the following conversation took place between him and a committeeman:

"Did you tell your bucks that they must have but one wife, Parker?"

"Yes, me tell 'um," responded the Indian.

"Did they get rid of the extra wives?"

"Yes, all gone," answered the chief.

"But," urged the committeeman, "I am told that you, yourself, have six wives."

"Yes, me got six," said Parker.

"Now, this will not do, Parker. You have got to get rid of those extra wives. You go home and tell them to leave. Send them back to their parents. Tell them to go home."

"You tell 'um," responded the Indian.

### Soothing Prattle.

"It ain't everybody I'd put to sleep in this room," said old Mrs. Jinks to the fastidious and extremely nervous young minister who was spending his first night at her house. "This here room is full of sacred associations to me," she went on. "My first husband died in that bed with his head on them very pillers, and poor Mr. Jinks died sittin' right in that very chair there in the corner. Sometimes when I come into the room in the dark I think I see him sittin' there still. My own father died layin' right on that lounge under the winder. Poor pa! He was a Speeritualist, and he allus said he'd appear in this room again after he died; and sometimes I'm foolish enough to look for him. If you should see anything of him tonight you'd better not tell me, or it'd be a sign there was something in Speeritualism, and I hate to think that. My son by my first man fell dead of heart disease right where you stand. He was a doctor, and there's two whole skeletons in that closet that belonged to him, and half a dozen skulls in that lower drawer. Well, good night and pleasant dreams."

### Beyond Control.

"The courtroom has its fun as well as its tragedy," once observed William Travers Jerome. "Sometimes the humor is not as appreciable to the principal actors as to an outsider, as in the case I once attended in a New England Court, where a slander trial was on.

"The principal witness was an impetuous old woman. She talked so fast that the Judge was unable to follow her testimony, especially as it was delivered in the broadest of brogues. In vain he attempted to stop her.

"'Stop! Stop!' he cried, rapping sharply on his desk. But the torrent of words continued as before. 'Old woman, shut up!' he shouted in exasperation. But to no avail. The old lady was determined to have her say. Finally the unhappy Judge threw down his pen and yelled to the lawyer:

"'There, Mr. Murdock! You set her agoing, now stop her!'"

### Her Own Choice.

A man wished to make his wife a present of a lace collar, but had no desire to pay an extravagant price. "I want you to buy me a lace collar to give my Cousin Katie," he said to his wife. "Choose something nice—something like you would get for yourself."

The wife, however, had her own ideas as to generosity in buying presents, and the purchase, when she made it, consisted of a very simple article.

"H'm!" said the husband. "Is that what you would have chosen for yourself?"

"Exactly!" she replied.

"Well, my dear, keep it. I meant it for you!" he exclaimed with an amiable smile.

### Looked the Part.

In the spring of '89 a reporter for the Traveler, Opie Read's paper, died. The day after the funeral a visitor to the office found the editor and his staff talking about their late associate.

"It has been a sad loss, friends," the visitor said, "a sad loss, indeed." He sighed and looked about the room. "Ah, I am pleased to see," he went on, "that you commemorate the melancholy event by hanging up crape."

Opie Read frowned. "Crape!" he said. "Where do you see any crape?"

"Over there," said the visitor, pointing.

"Crape, be durned!" said Read. "That isn't crape. It's the office towel."

### His Own Fault.

There is a humorist in this town who promised to tell us a joke when we needed one, and he threw us down. Hence this story.

We met a fellow worker of his on the street the other day, and remarked: "Blank is looking down and out. What's the matter?"

"Hadn't you heard? He's lost his job."

"But how and why?"

"Well, he was making a pretty comfortable income writing mother-in-law jokes, you know."

"Yes, I know."

"That's all. He got married and cut himself off from his only source of revenue."

### That Awful Joke.

A negro hod-carrier in Macon, Ga., was lying down during the noon hour, sleeping in the hot sun. The clock struck one, the time to pick up his hod again. He arose, stretched and grumbled: "I wish I wuz daid. 'Tain' nothin' but wuk, wuk, frum mawnin' till night."

Another negro, a story above, heard the complaint, and dropped a brick on the grumbler's head.

Dazed, he looked up and said:

"De Lawd can' stan' no jokes. He jes' takes ev'ything in yearnist."

### A Rough Roadbed.

"Some of those Southern roadbeds are pretty rough," the commercial traveler remarked. "I remember on one occasion ordering some fried eggs for breakfast in the dining car. After I'd waited quite a while, the colored waiter returned and said: 'Sorry 'bout dem fried aigs, boss. De cook says de road's so rough dat ebery time he tries to fry aigs dey scrambles.'"

### Cause for Generosity.

"I fear the Greeks even when they bring me gifts," said Senator LaFollette apropos of a trust he disliked. "And when I see this trust being generous and charitable I think of a Madison young man in a smart restaurant.

"This young man's wife said to him, in a shocked tone, at the end of their repast:

"'Why, Jack, how extravagant you are! You tipped that waiter $1.50.'

"'Hush!' said Jack. 'He brought me change for a twenty when I'd given him only a ten. Would you have me be mean after that?'"

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VIRGINIA Orchards Pay Big Profits—$350 on easy payments secures ten-acre apple orchard tract in beautiful Shenandoah Valley; other lands from $15 per acre up; write for beautiful booklets and excursion rates. F. H. LaBaume, Agricultural Agent, Norfolk & Western Railway, Box 4042, Roanoke, Virginia.

FARMS—Hotels for Sale—New York State; illustrated catalogue free. H. L. Reed, Amsterdam, N. Y.

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PRINTING INKS, any color, 10c. Bronzes, Cards, Type, etc. Printers' Exchange, 958 W. Harrison, Chicago, Ill.

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SECRETS of the future revealed FREE. Mail birthdate, three questions, five 2-cent stamps for postage; reading will surprise you. Prof. Herman, Box 518, Englewood, Colorado.

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But the other fellow's job always looks so much easier than ours.

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## *Or, LOVE THAT TRIUMPHED*
### By Weldon J. Cobb

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### CHAPTER IX.
### A STRANGE MISSION.

WANTED. Mr. Ashl[illegible]

The newly appointed cashier of the banking establishment of John Vansant & Co. followed the indication of the clerk who had come to his desk, and proceeded towards the private office of his employer.

A week had passed by since the interview of Rolfe with Blanche Vansant. It had been uneventful so far as his suspicions regarding that regal beauty and his interest in Florence Henderson were concerned. He had not even seen the banker's daughter, and had discovered nothing whatever of the whereabouts of her cousin nor the real merits of her mysterious disappearance.

The banker had been unusually suave and friendly with him. Large amounts of ready cash came to the bank and left it. It looked to the watchful, mistrustful Rolfe as though Vansant was striving to swell the volume of business done on the books of the bank beyond normal, with some ulterior design in view. What it was he could not fathom, and the proposition began to interest him.

All was straight and regular, and Rolfe reflected that the banker might have interested new capital or was liquidating some of his numerous securities. One action of the part of the banker had somewhat surprised his cashier. He had bonded Rolfe, through a surety company, in the enormous sum of $100,000.

Rolfe was aware of the fact that even in more important positions than his own only a normal bond was usually required. Vansant, however, plausibly explained the situation.

"You see, Ashley," he had said, "this excessive bonding is no reflection on your trustworthiness. You will, however, handle very large amounts of cash, and will be responsible for securities of great volume in many important business transactions. The fact that your reliability is safeguarded so fully will inspire confidence in our clientele."

Rolfe accepted this as the true explanation of the circumstances. Affairs had gone on smoothly in a business way, and as he entered the private office of the banker, the latter greeted him as if he were some familiar friend and partner, rather than a man in his employ.

"Close the door, please, Ashley," spoke Vansant. "I wish to have an important private conference with you."

Even after the cashier had done as requested, the banker drew down an inside window, tried the corridor door leading to the mansion, and altogether acted in a mysterious and impressive way.

"Ashley," he spoke, reseating himself, "I have the most implicit confidence in you."

"Thank you, Mr. Vansant," replied Rolfe.

"A serious and most important business matter has come up, requiring the utmost secrecy and dispatch. It involves an immediate visit to a foreign land, courage, good judgment, fidelity. I believe you to possess these qualifications. I cannot leave my important business affairs here and go myself. I dare not trust an outside agent indiscriminately. Are you willing to co-operate with me?"

"I am your employe, Mr. Vansant," replied Rolfe, "and at your service to the very best of my ability."

"I will be brief and explicit, then," said the banker. "I wish you to arrange at once to go to South America."

"To South America?" repeated Rolfe wonderingly.

"First to Rio de Janeiro, Brazil. At that point you will meet a trusted agent of mine who will conduct you to a small town in the interior. To make no secret of it to you, I will tell you that I have an opportunity of buying for $25,000 a diamond-producing district in Brazil worth a million."

This sounded like a dream. Rolfe regarded the banker in surprise. The manner of the latter, however, was as calm and conservative as though he were discussing an investment in standard securities.

"I know my ground perfectly," proceeded Vansant. "You are to accompany the agent I refer to. You are to see that he conforms to all of the requirements of the Brazilian law as to securing valid legal ownership of the diamond claims. He is to perfect his title, return with you to Rio de Janeiro, transfer the claims to me, and then, and then only, are you to hand over to him a draft on New York for $25,000, with which I will provide you."

"When am I to go?" inquired Rolfe.

"At once. Remember, not a living soul must learn of your mission. No one must even know that you propose to leave Irondale until you are well on your way out of the country."

"Very well," nodded Rolfe.

"You will even disguise yourself. You must drive across country and take a train for New York, secure passage in an obscure coast steamer I shall designate, take an assumed name, and ever keep watch out for spies and enemies."

"Why all this mystery?" inquired Rolfe.

"Because others are watching me in this affair."

"Here in Irondale, you mean?" asked Rolfe in astonishment.

"Yes."

"You amaze me."

"Nevertheless, it is true," glibly lied the wily father of a wily siren. "Further details I will give you later. You will be provided with liberal means, every step in the adventure will be made easy for you, and if you put through this deal successfully, the day you return safely and place in my hands the deeds to the diamond claims, I shall make you a present outright of $10,000."

"Oh, sir," exclaimed Rolfe.

"Later I may make you my partner. Is it a bargain?"

"I will not fail in fidelity to your orders, Mr. Vansant."

Rolfe never suspected a trap. Vansant had engaged in many strange propositions in his business, and the present scheme was of a piece with some of his remote mining ventures.

After that, through part of two days, several private conferences took place between employer and employe. Vansant blocked out in minute detail the course Rolfe was to pursue.

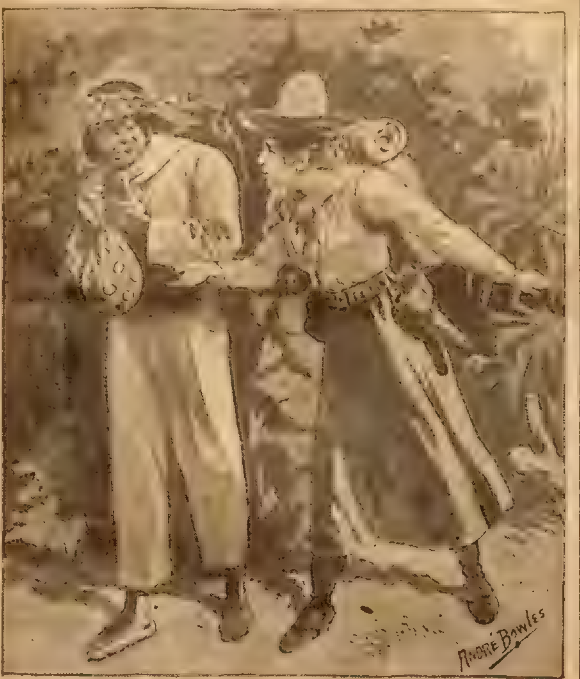
Rolfe tried to learn something more concerning Florence Henderson. In this he was severely disappointed, and at last he reluctantly though doubtingly was compelled to believe that, married or not to another, she did not care to have his further interest

One dark night, carrying a small satchel, Rolfe left his lodgings. He wore a false beard, as Vansant had directed, he drove across the country to a lonely little way station of a [illegible] railroad and bought a ticket to New York City.

Twenty-four hours later he had found the ship which the banker described to him, and under a false name left his native country.

In good faith the young bank cashier was started on an adventure, leaving behind a plot the details of which would have appalled him had he known them fully.

Rolfe Ashley little dreamed that the hatred of a base siren and the thirst for gold of a conscienceless schemer were sending him into the midst of peril rarely faced by mortal man.



"Here I must pause."

### CHAPTER X.
### DARKNESS AND DESPAIR.

"Has Mr. Ashley reported at the office this morning?"

"No, Mr. Vansant."

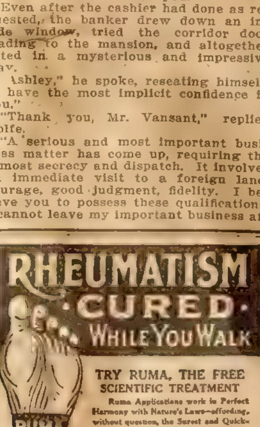
"Strange!"

Three mornings in succession the banker had spoken these same words, invariably with the same reply.

For three days the cashier of the institution had been missing from his desk in the countingroom.

The first day the banker had "supposed he had gone to visit some friends in a neighboring town."

The second morning Mr. Vansant appeared surprised and somewhat anxious. He openly marveled at the inexplicable absence of his confidential man at a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Here's good news for the man who vainly tries to plaster a few scanty locks over "that bald spot."

Good news for the woman whose hair is falling, whose locks are too scanty to properly pin up her false hair

Good news for both men and women who find a hand full of hair in their comb every morning. For men and women growing gray before their time

Good news for all with itching, burning, scalps, with dandruff, with any and all forms of hair and scalp trouble.

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In every case is was found that where there were any hair roots left it would produce a new and luxuriant growth of hair in from four to six weeks' time

[illegible] or faded hair was [illegible] restored to its [illegible] time. In minor [illegible]) and hair diseases, such as dandruff, falling hair, [illegible]ng scalp, etc., it was found that these unnatural conditions were corrected and often completely cured by two or three applications.

Crystolis is a household word in Europe, where it is acclaimed "the most marvelous scientific discovery for promoting hair growth." It has won gold medals at Paris and Brussels.

Better yet it has won the warmest words of praise from those who have been fortunate enough to test its remarkable qualities.

Crystolis has been tried out in America for over a year now. Hundreds of men and women from every state unhesitatingly hail it as a true hair grower.

Here is a statement of just a few of those who have tried—who have been convinced—and who will swear to the virtues of this marvelous preparation:

Mr. Kelly of Memphis, bald for 30 years, says: "My head is now covered with hair nearly an inch long, friends simply astounded."

Mrs. Evans of Chicago writes: "Since using Crystolis can report new hair an inch long coming in thickly all over my head."

Mr. Macklain of St. Louis reports: "One treatment made my hair two inches longer."

Mr. Morse of Boston declares: "I lost my hair eighteen years ago. Have used less than one treatment. My head is now entirely covered with a thick growth of hair of natural color. No more itching, no more falling hair, no more dandruff."

Mr. Boyd of Chicago says: "My bald spot was as shiny as a peeled onion. It is now all covered with thick new hair. The grayness is also disappearing."

Mr. Mourer of Cleveland declares: "Crystolis is the only thing which actually grows hair."

[illegible] Morris of Philadelphia writes after only three weeks' use: "I can see new hair in plenty and it is now a half inch long."

Lewis Nuff says: "New hair began to grow in ten days after beginning the treatment."

Mrs Jackson of New York writes: "My hair stopped falling the first week. No more itching scalp and [illegible]

Mr. Arnott of Cleveland reports: "Itching scalp stopped the second day, dandruff gone, no more falling hair."

Mrs. Rose of Rock Island writes: "Was almost wild for five years with itching scalp. Two or three applica[illegible] stopped this. Now I have a fine new growth of hair."

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time when business requirments were important and urgent.

Now he stood looking grave and apparently worried. Finally he spoke to his head clerk, who was standing by.

"I don't like this, Roberts," he said.

"No, sir," agreed the man with humility.

"I can't understand it."

"No more do I, Mr. Vansant."

"Cash all right—no irregularities?"

"None, sir."

"And the surplus?"

"No one handles that except you and Mr. Ashley."

"Bring out the box, I am getting uneasy."

The head clerk went into the massive steel vault of the institution. He unlocked an inner door, and reappeared, carrying a large metal box.

The precious receptacle of the surplus funds of the bank was placed upon a broad table. Many a clerk regarded it with awe, for it was generally known that it usually held a very large sum of money.

"There should be $111,500 in cash," observed the banker, consulting a ledger on a desk near at hand.

"We will verify it, sir," observed his assistant. "Zounds!"

The speaker drew back as if he had been struck by a cannon ball

The banker cast one apparently appalled look at the box as the cover was swung open.

"Empty!" he shouted, and fell over two chairs, landing against the gaping, startled group of clerks, seemingly a man undone.

If John Vansant was not a natural actor, he outdid himself this time. Later on those who discussed the episode dwelt upon his emotional display as something thrilling

"Send for the police!" were the first coherent words he spoke.

The bank was a scene of vast commotion during the ensuing hours of the day. The police came, then the reporters, and finally a serious-faced, frightened-looking gentleman who represented the great North American Guaranty and Fidelity Co.

This individual was closeted with the banker for a long time. Joining their interview later came the local chief of detectives.

There was no doubt but that the bank had been looted, and that Rolfe Ashley was the culprit. The money was gone, and the missing cashier was the only person outside of Vansant who had a key to the surplus strong box. Furthermore, the police had ascertained that he left Irondale secretly and disguised. Everything pointed to a clever effort to throw the emissaries of justice off the track.

The next morning the public press was filled with details of the most extensive bank looting of the year. The day ensuing the president of the bonding company arrived on the scene personally.

John Vansant acted well the grieved, astounded employer. Quite as cleverly he discoursed on the great loss the disappearance of the money at a time when he could have invested it to advantage meant to him.

"It must be a speedy reimbursement," he remarked, "or I am ruined."

"You require the entire $100,000?" asked the trust company's man anxiously.

"That is according to the terms of our contract."

"Yes. It is a hard pull on us, but we will pay the amount at once. Our only hope is to set detectives all over the world looking for Ashley."

One week later, John Vansant received the $100,000 from the fidelity company. At the time detectives all over the world were looking for the absconding cashier. Not a trace of him was discovered. The case was a nine days wonder. Its details were read in remote districts all over the country.

In the retired and distant home of a relative where Blanche Vansant had placed her, the grief-stricken Florence Henderson perused the lines that branded as a common thief and a hunted fugitive from justice the only man she had ever loved. All that was joyous in life seemed departed from her soul at the dread intelligence. For a day or two she was like some being crushed, despairing, hopeless.

Then she tried to divert her mind with some interest in a career before her. She resolved to return to Irondale unannounced. She knew that in some way her uncle held in trust property left her by her dead father She would ask for a small sum of money to take her to a business center where she could find permanent employment. She would seek a quiet, retired life, bearing the burden of her sorrow as patiently as she could.

A dejected, spiritless girl, she reached Irondale at dusk. She walked to the Vansant mansion. Its front was dark and forbidding. She was weary from her journey. She hoped she would meet no one to whom she would have to explain her unexpected return until she had rested and was strong enough to combat the probable reproaches of her domineering cousin

Florence had a latchkey to the front door. She let herself in noiselessly, unobserved she stole down the hallway, and hearing a servant approaching, she glided into a little alcove adjoining the library.

It held a couch, and utterly wearied and exhausted, the poor girl sank upon it for a moment's grateful rest,

Life was at its bleakest for Florence Henderson at that moment. She was a friendless, unprotected orphan, her lover a hunted criminal, and all about seemed tinged with mystery and distrust.

Cheer up, poor fainting heart! Though it may seem that the hand of fate rests heavily upon you, for you and for the duped, trustful Rolfe Ashley, who is being led into a perilous jungle in a distant land at the behest of cruel, dangerous enemies, the bright morning of joy shall break radiantly, and faith and courage shall lead to the light, for he on whom Heaven's hand resteth, hath Heaven at his right hand!

## CHAPTER XI.

## THE PRICE OF A SOUL.

Florence felt her senses blur, as after her rigorous journey she sank upon the luxurious couch with a grateful respite of comfort and rest. She may have swooned away from sheer exhaustion. She did not know later, but at all events she lapsed into a dreamy apathy akin to the stupor of profound sleep.

As she finally stirred and awoke, she was concerned and startled to hear voices near at hand. Instantly she recognized them. Then a pencil of light shone through the meeting of draperies connecting the alcove with the library, and she made out the occupants of the apartment beyond—the banker and his daughter.

Evidently they had come into the library while Florence slumbered, for the first words the intruder heard were only a part or continuation of a previous conversation. It was not in the gentle, ingenuous soul of Florence to act the spy or eavesdropper. She was about to arise and announce her proximity, when the thought occurred to her that her cousin and uncle would soon leave the room. Then, a sudden suspicion, aroused vividly by a sentence spoken, held her riveted to the couch.

"There is the money," Vansant was saying, and he pushed across the table towards his daughter a heap of crisp green banknotes.

"Twenty-five thousand dollars!" murmured Blanche, covetously fondling the money.

"Yes. It is a good deal of money, Blanche."

"I need a good deal."

"Invested in my now promising business venture, it might duplicate in thirty days."

"I have a better investment in view. Listen, father," spoke Blanche in a hard, resolute tone. "I have been the means of saving you $100,000 when your outlook was hopeless and the house of John Vansant & Company was on the brink of ruin."

"Fortunately, yes, admirable business woman that you are!"

"To secure it I have sacrificed the safety, the honor, perhaps the life of the only man I really cared for—Rolfe Ashley."

It was this amazing declaration that held Florence Henderson in a vise of steel, chilled, marveling, appalled.

"I have sold my soul for that money," proceeded Blanche icily, almost bitterly. "This small part of it I have demanded as the means of reaching the only ambition or pleasure now left to me."

"You mean?" inquired Vansant.

"With that money I intend to win high social distinction. I wish to humiliate and crush the Marsdens. I aim to reign as the queen of a ruling social set. I intend to buy my position, to secure a wealthy husband."

"You are a remarkable girl, certainly," murmured the banker.

A slight frown crossed his face. Hard-hearted money-getter that he was, perhaps some twinge of conscience came to him as he reflected how sordid his precepts and training had made his only child

"We are in the vortex, and we must go," pronounced Blanche, definitely. "There must be no break to my plans, all obstacles in my path must be swept aside. Rolfe Ashley must never return."

"He will never return. Do not fear on that score," pledged Vansant.

"You cabled specifically to your secret agent at Rio de Janeiro?"

"In cipher. By this time, led on a false scent, young Ashley is threading the maze of some wild Brazilian jungle, to be led to the far interior, where he will become a prisoner, a member of a savage tribe that will never allow him to escape."

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"But he might escape," suggested Blanche.

"To die in the wilderness. No, he would never find his way back to civilization."

"Robert Henderson escaped," again suggested Blanche.

A white terror came into the face of the banker. He trembled all over.

"Why—why do you bring up that name?" he stammered.

"Are you so afraid of a dim wraith of the past?" demanded Blanche, scornfully. "As I say, the father of Florence Henderson escaped."

"And was never heard of again. So with Rolfe Ashley. No, no! Reassure your mind, Blanche; young Ashley has disappeared effectually from the eyes of man."

"I have often wondered," resumed Blanche, "why you have kept Florence Henderson here. The girl interfered in my plan concerning Rolfe Ashley, and her continued presence here will be a constant reminder and reproach to me."

"Then she shall not remain," pronounced Vansant. "When she returns I will arrange to have her locate in the city. You see, I hold some securities and property for her. In a few weeks she will be of age. I expect to be able to influence her to leave her fortune in my hands, and satisfy her with a few thousand dollars."

"Are you sure her father is dead?"

"Legally, the courts say he is dead, so who can disturb that point?"

"Then it is plain sailing ahead for us Now let us go point by point over our affairs, so there may be no mistake in our plans."

Florence Henderson lay stunned, horrified, astounded, upon the couch. She could scarcely credit the evidence of her senses. Detail by detail, step by step, the two unprincipled plotters reviewed every act in the gigantic scheme of fraud and danger that had culminated in bringing them $100,000, that had robbed Florence of the man she loved

Her eyes were opened. She learned the true inwardness of her banishment from the house. She knew now that Rolfe Ashley had experienced no change in his sentiments toward her, except so far as the lying misrepresentations of Blanche had affected him.

Florence saw Blanche put the money, the price of her soul, into a drawer and lock it securely. Father and daughter arose and left the room. The bewildered Florence was alone with her thought, overcome by the realization of the mighty plot of which she was a part, which had made of her lover a hero, perhaps a martyr.

Bit by bit, sentence by sentence, Florence went over all the hideous revelations to which she had just listened. So closely had the plotters followed details, that they had named persons and places in Brazil, and Florence had in her possession an intimate knowledge of the progress and final destination of the deluded Rolfe Ashley

She started up with a sudden idea in her mind—to rush from the house, to seek the police, to unfold all the iniquitous plot of the banker and his daughter to the public.

Inexperienced as she was, however, Florence soon realized that this would be folly. Her enemies were too strongly entrenched in positions of wealth and influence. Her strange, incredible story would be treated as the fever dream of a wild mind. The plotters, as she well knew, had covered their tracks closely. They would persecute her, possibly put her out of the way, as they had others who stood in their path.

An hour passed by. In tense, anguished thought, poor Florence wrestled mentally with the terrific problems suggested by the disclosures of the Vansants. It seemed to her that in that time she changed from a trustful, inexperienced girl into a strong, aroused woman, urged on by love and loyalty to become a champion of a lost father and lover.

In her anxious soul was born the hope that her father might yet be living. In her mind's eye was the picture of her isolated, imperiled lover, shut out from the world by cruel, sordid hands.

The house was all silent now. All the lights were out. The household had apparently retired to rest. Florence turned on a small electric light bulb. It enabled her to locate the table at which the banker and his daughter had recently conversed.

For a full quarter of an hour she worked under the drawer, attempting noiselessly to force it open. At last she succeeded. She took out some of the bank-notes Blanche Vansant had stowed there. Securing a number of these, Florence reclosed the drawer.

Then she took up a pen and drew toward her a paper tab. Hurriedly she indited the following note to John Vansant.

'I have borrowed $2,000 of my own money. Let this be my acknowledgment of the same. I am going to try a new life, independent of your influence or control."

Florence placed this note where it would be readily found. Noiselessly, unobserved as when she had entered the mansion, she now left it.

The streets were silent and deserted. Which way should she turn, whither should she go? Realizing that her abstraction of the money and mystifying note would arouse suspicion and possible pursuit on the part of the Vansants, Florence decided that she must get as far and fast away from Irondale as possible.

There was one impelling motive in her mind—to reach South America. A bright star in the firmament seemed to beckon her—a star set in Brazilian skies over the land that held all her love and interest.

Courage, frail, innocent child of fortune! Thousands of weary miles before thee, uncounted perils blocking the way, unheard of villainy in pursuit, yet shalt thou succeed! Out of the feverish and unreal there shall yet glow, firm and undimmed, the serenity and calm of great soulful purposes!

This story, developing very thrilling happenings, will be continued in the Ledger issue of next week. If you are not a regular subscriber to the Ledger we would like to have your name on our list. The Ledger is only $1.00 per year; it is worth many times that amount. Send in your subscription, for many great stories that you cannot afford to miss will appear during the coming year.

* * *

## Humor by a Briton.

Our British cousins have been accused of being devoid of humor for so long that the following yarn is told to remove the imputation in a measure. Not so very long ago an Englishman, just across, visited Sandpoint, one of the large lumbering towns in the Northwest. Practically the entire town and country are owned by the Humbird Lumber Company. The Englishman was taken out into the great pine forests where immense white pines tower on every side.

"To whom does this forest belong?" he asked.

"To the Humbird Lumber Company," was the answer.

He was shown through the large lumber plant and informed that it belonged to the Humbirds. The fine bank building, the great department store, rows upon rows of dwellings, all belonging to the same corporation.

As a crowning treat he was taken for a spin around Lake Pend Oreille in a swift launch. Upon their return, while standing upon the dock, he asked:

"May I ask who owns this lake?"

"Oh, it belongs to God."

"Aw, really, is that so? Now, would you mind telling me how He managed to get it away from Mr. Humbird?"

* * *

## The Actor's Decoration.

Senator Beveridge, at a reception in Washington smiled slightly as an ambassador passed whose coat front was one blaze of decorations.

"They look nice," said Senator Beveridge, "but, after all, they don't mean much."

"An actor," he resumed, "once played in a small German principality for a fortnight. The grand duke, to his disappointment, failed to decorate him. He mentioned this oversight at a court dinner to a chamberlain, and the next day he was sent for.

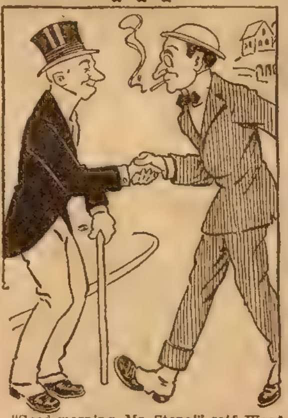
"'My, friend,' said the grand duke, handing the actor a box, 'here is something to remember me by.'

"The overjoyed actor departed, but his cab had hardly gone ten yards when, ordering it to return again, the actor was once more ushered into the grand duke's presence.

"'Oh, sir,' he said, 'I had to drive back There are two crosses in the box.'

"'Oh, no matter,' said the grand duke, 'give the other to the cabman.'"

* * *



"Good morning, Mr. Stone!" said Wood pleasantly. "And how are Mrs. Stone and all the little pebbles?"

"Quite well, thank you, Mr. Wood," replied Stone. "And how are Mrs. Wood and all the little splinters?"

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### They Need It.

A colored preacher in closing his sermon addressed the congrega .

"And now let us pray for the people of the uninhabited portion of the earth."

### The Masculine Way.

Men preach and practice by the card
But it s a lead-pipe cinch
They do their preaching by the yard,
And practice by the inch.

### Suburban Recreation

Mr. Citiman—What do you do for excitement in Lonelyville?

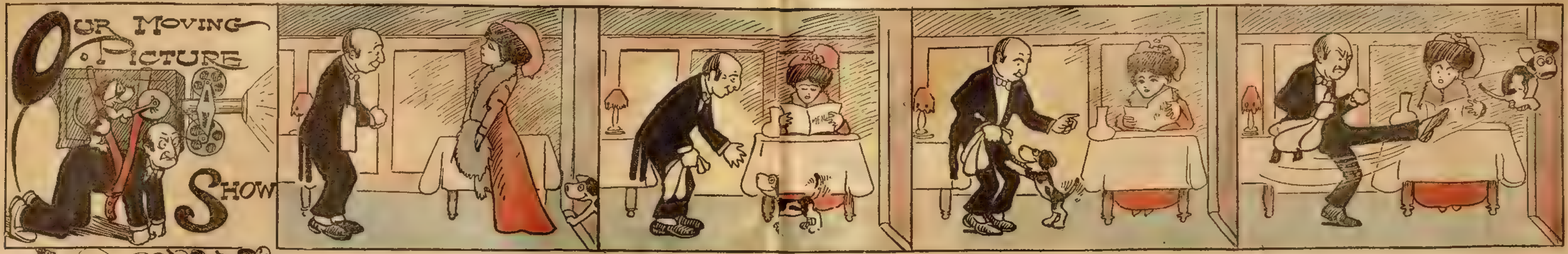
Mr. Suburb—Oh, our house burns down on e in a whil.

### No More Credit.

Mrs. Spendall—You look worried Is it because you are so deeply in debt?

Mr. Spendall (gloomily)—No. It's because I can't get any deeper.

# WORKINGFOR A TIP.



The Walter—Will you sit here by the window, please? It's a lovely day

The Walter—Ah, what a beautifdoggie! Does the nice doggie want something to eat?

The Lady—Sir, that is not my dog

The Walter—Get out of here you low lived mutt!

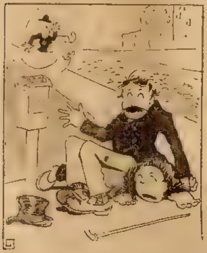
### The Insult.

"I'll get even with Bumpus," said Harrity. "I hear that he called me a lobster the other day."

"How very insulting!" ejaculated Jarley.

"Wasn't it?" said Harrity, his face red with wrath.

"It certainly was; and I am really surprised," said Jarley 'Bumpus is so fond of lobsters as a rule"



Man on Top—Pardon me! The sidewalk s rather slippery this morning, eh?

Fat Man Underneath—Yes; that is true. But have you noticed it is also hard and cold?

### Get Healthy Jurors.

Jimson—I wouldn't hang a man on any "expert" testimony of doctors. Would you?

Jamson—Not if I were in good health.

'Humph! What s that to do with it?"

"I haven't much faith in doctors—when I'm well."

### The Age of Organization.

New Boarder—Well! well! This is the first place I've struck where they have preserved strawberries and peach jam instead of stewed prunes

Old Boarder—All owing to organization, my boy. We boarders have a mutual protective association, with iron-clad rules and heavy penalties

"Oh, ho! You kicked against prunes, did you?"

"Not much we didn't. We passed a law that whenever prunes came on the table every member should eat a quart or pay a ten-dollar fine. That settled it. The landlady found prunes too expensive."

### A Sure Thing.

Sparkle—Your sister is wearing one of Miss Pinkie's rings. I wish you'd get it for me. I want to take the measure. Going to buy an engagement ring, you know.

Barkle—Eh? Has Miss Pinkie accepted you?

Sparkle—She will, when I propose. Last night she asked me how I liked her mother.

### Exactly.

"The middleman ought to be eliminated if we want to lower the price of necessities."

"In other words, if we eliminate the middleman it will be easier to provide for the inner man."

### Unprofitable Game.

City Sportsman—Any game here?

Jerseyman—Plenty o' snipe.

"Snipe! It doesn't pay to hunt them. Too small."

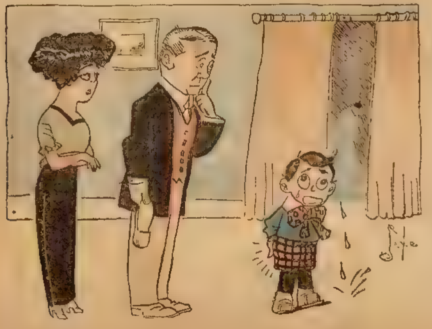
"Too small ter cook?"

"Too small to hit."

### Mamma Smokes, Too.

Aunt Mary (horrified) —Good gracious, Harold, what would your mother say if she saw you smoking cigarettes?

Harold (calmly)—She'd have a fit. They're her cigarettes.



Tommy (after the correction)—I fink I'll go back to heaven where I came from.

### Sure of the Fact.

An Irishman applying for a pension at Washington insisted upon the justice of his claim owing to the fact that he had been wounded while in the service of his country.

"How and where were you wounded?" one of the committee inquired

Placing his hand over his heart he said: "I was shot in the br'reast on a retreat from Bull Run, yer honor."

"Shot through the breast on a retreat?" said the committeeman. "How could you be shot through the breast on a retreat"

"I had the indiscretion to tur'rn and look back, yer honor"

"But if you were shot through the breast in the place you indicate the ball would have gone through your heart. How is that?"

"My heart was in me mouth at the time, yer honor."

### Quite Natural.

"I wish to see the lady of the house," said the tramp at the back door

'I am she," answered the lady

"Go on—send me the missus,' said the hobo

Look here, you impudent creature! I am the lady of this house, and its mistress You can't stand here insulting me pretending you think I'm a hired girl either. You get right out of this—"

"Softly, madam," interrupted the bum, "you mistake my mistake. You looked so independent, so happy, so autocratic, madam, that I thought you were the cook I hope you will pardon me the error was natural, as you must confess"

### Simple Solution.

"The bluff cheery optimism of the late Senator Frye," said a Lewiston divine, "could not brook a whiner."

"Once, at a dinner here in Lewiston, a whiner seated opposite Senator Frye said dolefully:

" 'I have only one friend on earth—my dog.'

" 'Why don't you get another dog?' said said Senator Frye."

### Ethel Was "On."

Maud who was sitting with her young man on the piazza, called in to Ethel in the parlor to play them something

"What shall I play?" the latter called back.

"Oh, anything you can think of that's appropriate."

"Then I'll play something soft," said Ethel, seating herself at the piano.

### Due Acknowledgments.

"Why did you shoot at me?"

"Took you for a deer."

"Didn't you see my bright-red coat? Does a deer wear a bright-red coat?"

"No; I thought it seemed rather odd as I shot"

### Love in a Palace.

Mrs. De Style—So Miss D Avnoo is going to marry Mr Billion? I thought she would take Mr Million

Mrs. De Fashion—She did intend to, but Mr. Billion rushed in at the last moment and bid fifty thousand dollars higher.

### Just Asking.

"Now, Bobby," said the mother angrily, "don t let me speak to you again."

"But," returned the naughty little fellow, "how can I prevent you, mamma?

### Nearly.

Church—Is he an eligible widower?

Gotham—Almost. He's growing a new crop of hair.

### Warning to Cooks.

Bill How did Phil's house catch fire?

Jill—Well, he don't exactly know, but he thinks it may have caught from the fireless cooker.

### Something Hotter.

She—Ah, Jack! What can equal the warmth of a true woman's love?

He—The heat of her temper, my dear.

### Sadly Mistaken.

"Du on is rathera consistent

"Wh do you think?"

'Jus because he hapns to be a sticke thinks he's psidential timbe

### Just Before the Interest Quickens.

"I hope your novel ends happily?"

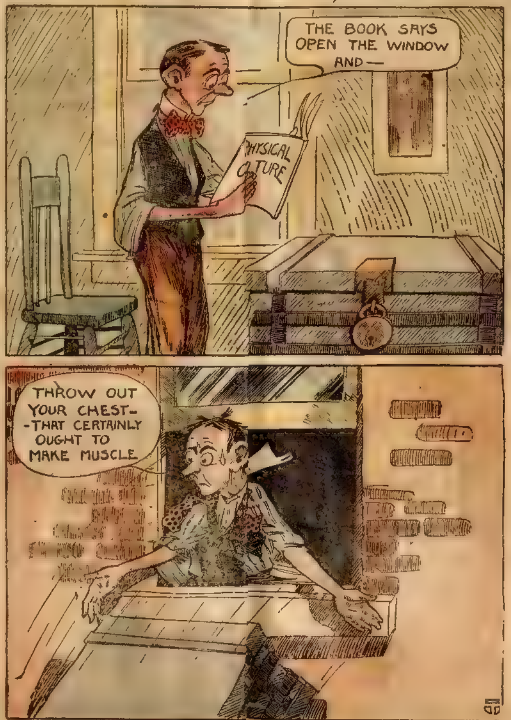
"Indeed it does. It ends in the marriage of the heroine and hero; does not go into their married life at all."

### Throwing Stones.

"I think that partner you just danced with is the ugliest man I've ever seen."

"Hush, dear, you forget yourself."

## ATHLETIS BY MAIL.


THE BOOK SAYS OPEN THE WINDOW AND—
PHYSICAL CULTURE
THROW OUT YOUR CHEST- -THAT CERTAINLY OUGHT TO MAKE MUSCLE

### His Fateful Message.

She was the fairest of the fair. Her cheeks glowed with the blush of happiness, her eyes flashed with a gleam of joy, she tossed her head merrily at the gay remarks of those who spoke to her

Not a care, not a cloud, seemed to be in her life.

Plucking her arm nervously, he bent toward her and hissed a few words in her ear

Immediately she became nervous, distrait, self-conscious

What did he say to her? Were his words bitter ones? Were they the words that rise from a jealous heart?

Ah, no. He merely told her that her plaquet latch was unhooked.

### Bad for Georgia.

Mr. Gotham—I see that a new law in Georgia prohibits the selling of liquor within three miles from a church or a schoolhouse

Colonel Kaintuck (of Louisville)—My stars! That's a terrible blow to Georgia.

Mr. Gotham—Think so?

Colonel Kaintuck—Mercy, yes In five years there won't be a church or schoolhouse left in the State.

### A Determined Sportsman.

He had returned from a long, weary, unsuccessful fishing trip. A dog ran across the road, barking fiercely.

"Aren't you afraid he'll attack you?" asked the friend

"I wish he would. I'd take almost any kind of a chance to be able to go home and say I had just one bite."

### Then She'd Say It.

"I assure you," said the persistent suitor, "that I will not take 'no' for an answer"

"You needn't," replied Miss Bright. "I ll say 'yes' upon one condition."

"Ah! Name the condition."

"Just ask me if I am determined not to marry you under any circumstances."

### Curious Credential.

Clerk (to patent medicine man)—Here is a curious credential from one of our customers.

Medicine Man—Read it.

Clerk—Before I took your elixir my face was a sight. You ought to see it now. Send me another bottle for my mother-in-law

### Sad Shirts.

He—Has our new laundress melancholia, my dear?

She—I'm sure I don't know. Why do you ask?

He—Nothing, only I noticed the clothes are so blue?

### Had Learned Since.

Mrs. Peckem—I expect my brother will live and die a bachelor. He says he's afraid to marry

Peckem—That's funny. I never knew what fear was—when I was single.

### A Neighborly View.

Caller—Your next-door neighbors appear to be very quiet people.

Mrs. Spinks—Yes the walls are very thin, and I s'pose the mean things keep quiet to hear what we say.

### They All Do.

"He never used an oath until after we were married."

"And what taught him to swear then?"

"An auto."

### Nothing Much.

"I don't know whether I ought to recognize him here in the city or not Our acquaintance at the seashore was very slight."

You promised to marry him, did you not?"

"Yes, but that was all."

### Soft and Sweet.

Her Prospective—There are no grounds on which your father could throw me out

His Prospective—No, not in the front of the house, but there's a bed of gladiolas in the back yard which I [illegible] soft.

### Diogenes Suspected.

"I am looking for an honest man," said Diogenes severely

"So am I," replied the plain citizen. "And, by the way, that lantern you are carrying looks exactly like the one that was taken from my back porch."

### Not Much Chance.

The Soap Agent—Do you think I could sell any of my goods to Mr. Blackstone?

The Plumber—Hardly; I put a leaky bathtub in his house more than two years ago and he hasn't found it out yet.

### An Inducement.

An insurance agent in Iola who advertises to insure against accident and sickness, concludes: "Then, when you get hurt or are sick you can stay at home and enjoy yourself."

### One Good Quality.

Mrs. Minks—There's one good thing about these matches. They always make a noise when one steps on them.

Mr. Minks—Yes, they are just as safe as rattlesnakes.

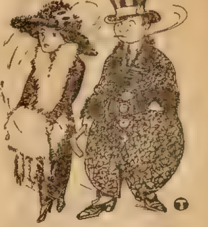
### It May Be.

'I see that coal dust is said to be beneficial to the health '

"Is that old whe ze going the rounds again

"Then you have heard it before?"

'Yes: I think some dub puts it into circulation every fall, just to jolly the people who have furnaces to tend."



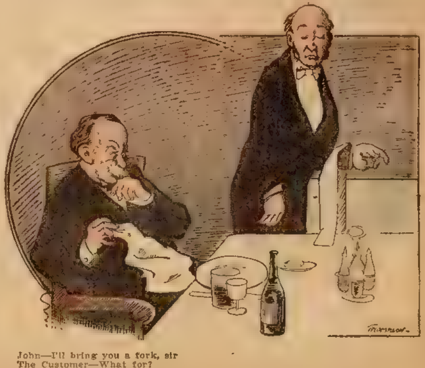
Beryl—My papa believes in making his presence felt.

Edwin—I wish his shoes were made of the same material.

### A Born Quibbler.

"Didn't I tell you not to shoot any quail on this place'

'Yassuh," replied Uncle Rasberry "You done tole me an' I done heard you Dis ain't no quail Dis is a partridge."



John—I'll bring you a fork, sir

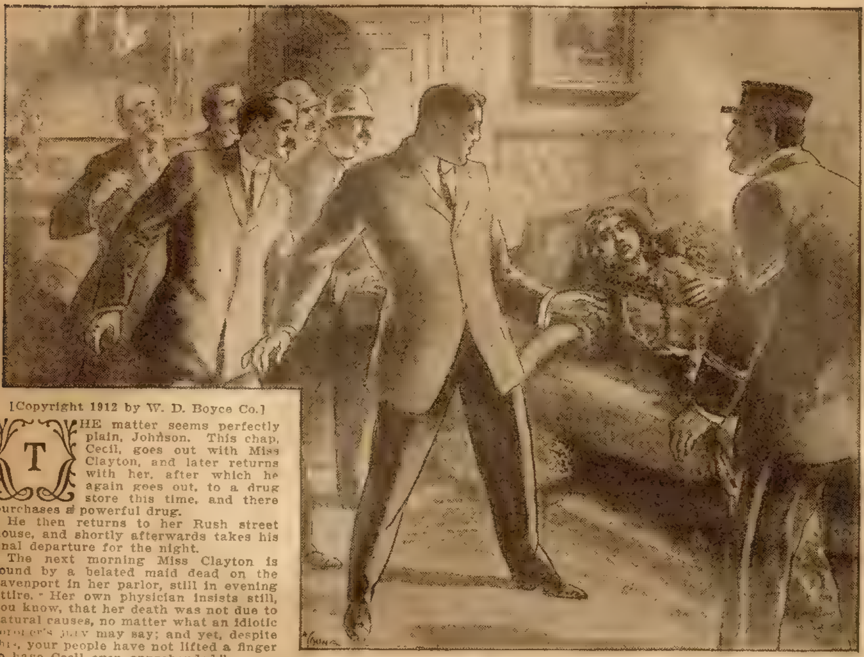
The Customer—What for?

John—The cheese, sir.

The Customer—A fork's no good. Bring a revolver!

# The Golden Serpent

### By George Wycherley Kaye



"Why, my God! It is Berenthine!"

[Copyright 1912 by W. D. Boyce Co.]

THE matter seems perfectly plain, Johnson. This chap, Cecil, goes out with Miss Clayton, and later returns with her, after which he again goes out, to a drug store this time, and there purchases a powerful drug.

He then returns to her Rush street house, and shortly afterwards takes his final departure for the night.

The next morning Miss Clayton is found by a belated maid dead on the davenport in her parlor, still in evening attire. Her own physician insists still, you know, that her death was not due to natural causes, no matter what an idiotic coroner's jury may say; and yet, despite this, your people have not lifted a finger to have Cecil even apprehended."

The State's Attorney settled himself more comfortably in his office chair and shot a fleeting glance at the angry speaker. His glance thence wandered out through the window into the busy street.

"It is evident, Brown," he replied calmly, "that you are not exactly familiar with the due forms and process of law. Granted that what you say may be true, yet what earthly object could such a gentleman as Topham Cecil have in making away with such a lovable, beautiful woman as Miss Clayton, pray? Both his coachman and valet aver that the drug he bought was used to put out of its misery a wounded pointer of his. It's pretty hard on Cecil as it stands; looks as haggard as an old man over it. You have no reason in your suspicion, dear fellow," he added, relighting his cigar.

"That is the very point, Johnson—he did have some powerful motive for desiring her death. I don't know yet just what it was——" Brown hesitated, his brow corrugated with thought—"But I am positive of that. I have seen him look at her with the deadliest hatred, when he thought no one saw him and she was intent on other matters."

"Pardon me, Brown," the State's Attorney's voice was suavely courteous; "pardon me, if I seem personal—but were you not yourself engaged to Miss Clayton at one time, eh?"

"Harmon Brown's face flushed beneath its summer tan. "I do not see why you choose to bring that up here. Neither am I at all able to catch the connection between my affairs and Cecil's in this. I confess I am not able to see what that has to do with it," he said shortly. "This man Cecil has murdered Miss Clayton, I am certain. Supposing then, that the coroner does report that no traces of poison were found; what does that prove? We all know that there are poisons whose presence would escape the crude, bungling tests of the hospital interne, generally assigned to make them. You know it as well as I do," he added aggressively, pulling on his gloves.

"That is all very well," answered the State's Attorney soothingly, "but where do we, in my office, get off at? After the receipt of your letter I made further inquiries by cable through our ambassador in London as to Mr. Cecil's past, and the answer was eminently satisfactory. Oxford, the Guards, India, South Africa and a V. C. He came to this city three months ago, with letters from several of the British nobility to the most exclusive people here, and has the entree everywhere. Met him myself at the Union Club; seems to be a very nice sort of a chap."

"Well," sniffed Brown, rising from his chair and buttoning his auto coat, "as I said before, what has all that to do with the case at issue? If you will permit me to say so, I am distinctly disappointed at the official indifference displayed regarding the fate of that unfortunate lady. Here is a lady, well born and bred, with a fortune, hosts of friends and perfect health; she goes out with this fellow, and three hours later they return. Early the next morning she is found dead, her face distorted in a look of terrible agony, a horror that still glared out of her eyes." He paused a moment, nervously fingering his goggles. "I don't suppose that you people have even discovered that Cecil is named in her will as the sole legateee!"

The State's Attorney's feet came down from the adjacent chair with a snap, as he sat upright. "No!"

Brown smiled his nastiest. "Yes, it is true. Pity your office and the probate court don't connect up once in a while. This case has stirred me up, Johnson. In fact I put Bohan on it, at my own expense, and I expect another report from him tonight."

"See here, Brown, you have gotten rather raw since we were together at Johnny Harvard's school; and you are a little too fond of flicking others on the raw. But I tell you what I will do. Send Bohan to my apartment on Park boulevard tonight, after you have seen him, and I will dive more deeply into this affair. So Cecil is the sole legatee? I'll phone over for Peyton, the interne who made the tests; think I'll get Professor Witt, too. He is a sharp on chemistry and such stuff. No, I won't want you. Going? Well, so long!"

"What do you make out of it, Bohan?" the Attorney asked the small wiry detective, a few hours later. "Mr. Brown seems to think Mr. Cecil poisoned Miss Clayton, eh?"

Bohan smiled slightly, then frowned. "To tell you the truth, Mr. Johnson, I don't know what to think. I have put in three days hard work on the case, and it is a greater mystery to me than ever. You know—did Mr. Brown tell you that her grave even had been broken into?"

"What!—broken into? When, for heaven's sake?"

"Last night. Didn't he tell you? I had stopped in at a place this morning for a cocktail before breakfast, and happened to hear a fellow telling the barkeeper that a friend of his who lives up near Rosehill had told him that a vault had been broken into. The gang that did the job must have been professionals, all right, to have eluded the watchmen. I didn't think much about it at the time, but later it came to me, and I got to thinking about it. Well, to make the story short, I climbed on a train and went up to Rosehill. And there I find that it is Miss Clayton's vault that had been entered. All her rings and jewelry were gone."

Peyton, the interne, uttered an exclamation: "What is the sense of that, save to show a robbery? You know, Mr. Johnson," he continued, turning to the attorney, "that I reported to the coroner that her death was not due to natural causes. Asked if there was traces of poison, I had to answer 'No.' Hence the verdict, I suppose. I never saw a more healthy person in my life; everything normal; not a mark or scar—Oh! yes, there was a small blue mark on her right arm, caused probably by striking it against something; or, it may have come from the clasp of the bracelet she wore on her arm—a curious gold snake with green eyes. I wasn't satisfied, afterwards, and I talked to the Professor here, about it, and he had agreed to go out to Rosehill with me tomorrow."

The violent ringing of the telephone bell interrupted him.

"Who is it?" asked Johnson, answering the call. "What's that?—'Never mind?' Well, who are you, anyway? What!" he exclaimed, after listening a moment. "Good God!" the others heard him mutter to himself. Still listening, he turned quickly about, his face full of amazement, and beckoned to Bohan who jumped to his side. Johnson pulled him closer and whisper into his ear. Bohan nodded and instantly transferred the receiver to his own ear. A hideous banging clangor, the strident discord of a tinpanny piano, mingled with the shrill singing of women and a roaring drunken chorus, caught his ear. A voice cut in just then: "Oh! yes. Who's that? Oh! no. You're not Mr. Johnson. Better change your voice, Johnny. Never mind who I am. 'Good-by Dolly, I must leeeeve you.'" The voice trailed off into a mocking song as its owner hung up the 'phone with a bang.

Immediately Bohan called up Central, located the call, traced through the information operator, and then gave the police call: "Main 13. Hello! This headquarters? Well, this is Dan Bohan talking. Say, send three or four men over to Tom Chase's place on Middle street at once and pinch the bunch, the women

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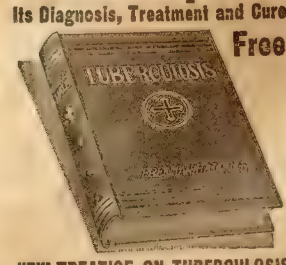

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especially. What authority? Mr. Johnson's. Here he is; he will tell you himself."

Hastily confirming this, Johnson 'phoned over to the garage for his car, while the others struggled into their coats. Bohan had told Peyton and Witt that some woman had just telephoned Johnson that if he wanted to solve the mystery about Miss Clayton's death, he could do so by searching Topham Cecil's house.

"I don't believe a word of it," objected Peyton. "She is fooling or lying. Mr. Cecil is a gentleman, any one can see that. It is a plant, but I guess that person talking is drunk and bragging about the robbery. Anyway, you would recognize her voice, would you not, Mr. Johnso?"

"Certainly. So will Bohan, I suppose. Come, men. Wait a moment till I get my revolver. Here Witt, you and Peyton had better arm yourselves, also. Help yourselves; they are part of the collection of firearms that piles up in every prosecuting attorney's career. There is the machine now. Let's be off."

As soon as the great red car could speed them there, they arrived at the place, where they found several perplexed policemen herding a dozen painted members of the demi-monde in a back-room. At the sight of the attorney, the screaming women launched a fresh volley of maledictions at him.

"One at a time, one at a time, ladies!" purred that official.

It did not take long to test their voices; also to discover that not one resembled the voice that had come over the 'phone. The waiters asserted that no one had used the only 'phone in the place for over two hours; furthermore, that no woman had gone out for three. Yet, both Johnson and Bohan were equally positive that the lisping foreign-sounding voice over the 'phone was that of a woman.

"Have you any other 'phone than this one?" asked the professor.

"No—Oh! Well, there's one upstairs, but no one's been up there yet. Want to see it?' Come on 'n' I'll show it to you," answered the barkeeper, proceeding Witt up the steep, narrow stairs. Almost immediately Witt called down:—Johnson, Bohan, come up here quick! Bring a policeman with you!"

The whole party ran upstairs to where the professor stood. "Look!" he said, pointing to an open window in the hall. "She may have crawled in here out of that window in the house opposite. There is only a foot's distance between. She may have come in here and used this 'phone. Perhaps she is in the house next door."

The police searched the house opposite, a cheap lodging-house, from cellar to garret, but in vain. There was no woman but the landlady, a little peroxide-haired vixen, who stated that no woman had been in any room in her house; that she would not have any women lodgers; those that were not bad wanted too many privileges. She also said that no one had been in that particular room during the day.

"That so?" interrupted Bohan. "Then what is this morning's paper doing here?" picking up a folded copy of the morning Star. "And, see here, here's something; looks like a bangle or one of them gold earrings Sicilians wear."

"Let's see it," said the landlady. "Well now—why, I bet that belongs to that Italian what went out a while ago. He was a fine looker. Come here this morning and got No. 49. How did he ever get in here?'

"Easy enough; I could do it myself with a hair-pin in this antediluvian lock," put in Peyton, who had been prowling about the room.

"Perhaps it was a woman in man's clothes," suggested Johnson, staring out of the window.

"Not a bit of it. I know he was a man," protested the landlady.

"How so?"

"Gee!" The woman hesitated, then laughed. "Well, he tried to kiss me when he went out a while ago. That's how I know."

Everybody laughed; but the attorney was not disconcerted. "Possibly that was only a bluff. What did you say, Bohan?"

"For my part, I say let's drop this end of the string and go look up Mr. Cecil. Nothin' doin' here. Just as well let that bunch of Lizzies downstairs go; then we can pike over to his place. He ought to be told about that message, anyway," he qualified, noting the disapproval in the State's Attorney's face.

There seemed to be nothing else to do, just then, so, leaving a plain-clothes man to shadow the Italian in case he returned to the lodging-house, they autoed over to Cecil's place, in town. His house, a leased one, set back some distance from the street amid ample ground and gardens. Shrouded by its lofty trees and close hedges, it loomed up dark and silent before them. Not a ray of light came from the great pile. Apparently all its inmates were in bed and asleep.

"There is some one or something moving about inside," whispered Bohan, with his ear to the door. "Listen!"

They could hear it now, a low shuffling scraping sound, muffled by the door, yet faintly audible. Suddenly an appalling yell from within rent the air and prickled the hair on the listeners' heads.

"My God! What's that?" queried the professor, half aloud.

A vague terror had taken hold of them all; a grisly fear of the grewsome thing that might be going on behind those closed doors. The very murk and gloom of the huge house weighed upon them like a funeral pall.

"I can't stand this any longer," ejaculated Johnson. "Come. Let us go in and find about this. I do not like the looks of things here." And straightway he hammered on the door with his heavy cane. No answer came. Johnson again beat a devil's tattoo on the oaken door.

"Who's there?" challenged a hoarse voice from within.

"Mr. Johnson. I want to see Mr. Cecil at once on most important business admitting of no delay."

"Mr. Cecil is not in," the voice answered, after a moment's hesitation. "He left the city this morning for Oak Park."

"That's a lie," whispered Bohan. "That is Mr. Cecil's voice. Besides, I saw him on State street this morning. What's that, Mr. Johnson? Spring the law on him? All right, sir." He struck the door a blow with his revolver-butt. "Open, in the name of the law."

They heard a smothered exclamation; then came the rattling of the night-latch chain, the turning of the great locks, and the door opened. Topham Cecil stood there confronting them, pistol in hand, his eyes blinking in the blare of the detective's bull's-eye.

"Who are you and what do you want?" he snarled at them. "That you, Johnson? What infernal nonsense is this, rousing a man up at this hour of the night?'

"Pardon me, Mr. Cecil, but I am under the painful necessity of searching your house at once."

"You can't do it—you shall not! Where is your search warrant?" broke in Cecil roughly. "Get out of here, all of you!" he concluded, bringing his pistol up.

"Put down that gun, Cecil!" commanded the detective sharply. "Don't you see that we are all armed. No four-flushing now. Come, Mr. Johnson."

Cecil stood there frowning an instant; then, turning quickly, he fled down the hall, and through the velvet curtains at its farther end. In the distance, they could hear doors slamming behind him. Without further ado, Witt sprang off the porch and ran around the house to intercept him, in case of an attempted escape.

The other three men at the front door stood and stared after Cecil. What was he up to—escape? Or was he lying in wait for them, in the dark rooms of the great house? There had been a desperate look on his tense face, a glare from his feverish eyes that boded ill to the man who cornered him.

"What do you think about it, Bohan?" asked Johnson. "Shall we risk it? I do not want to run you into danger," he added, turning to Peyton.

"Never mind that," cut in Peyton. "I am for going in, keeping a sharp look-out. Shut the slide of your lantern, Bohan, and come on.'

Once the light was covered, the darkness shut down on them so thickly that it seemed as if they could feel it. Everything in the world appeared to be blotted out of existence. Their sense of locality went glimmering to the winds that tossed the huge branches of the trees outside.

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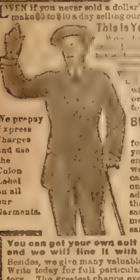

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way down the long broad hall, feeling their way with one hand, their revolvers tightly clutched in the other, ready for instant action. A fold of the heavy curtains, swinging back from Johnson's grasp, struck Bohan full in the face; startled, he dropped his dark lantern to the floor. The crash and the noise of it in the ominous silence about them brought them all up standing. For several seconds they stood there, listening intently. Not a sound came from the yawning caverns of darkness before them. The imminent peril of their situation, the chilling terror that the unknown and mysterious danger awakens in even the bravest of men, seized upon them as they paused there, engulfed in the Cimmerian gloom of the silent house.

By that curious telepathy begotten of the mind's intense concentration in such moments of common danger, the same conviction blazed its way through each of their brains. Cecil was guilty; he had poisoned Miss Clayton; and, later, learning or fearing that further investigation might be made, and knowing but too well its inevitable result, he was now seeking to cover up the proofs of his crime. Yet, Johnson, in mental maze, groped about Cecil's object—Oh! yes, it was her fortune. Just then, his hand struck against the door on the far side of the room.

"Come here!" he whispered to the others. "I have been in this house before. The room behind this is a reception room. In it a door straight ahead, leads to the diningroom. Another, in the middle of the right-hand wall, leads to the library, which has French windows opening on a broad veranda—Hark!

From further inside the house, there came a metallic, creaking noise

"What the devil is he up to?" whispered Peyton.

"I can see a light, a line of it, off to the right," interjected the detective, who was lying down and looking through the crack between the door and its sill. "I guess it must come from the library."

"He is in the library, eh?" queried Johnson. "Then here is our plan. Pay careful attention to it, as some one's life may depend on it. After I open this door here we all will crawl across the floor to the library door. Bohan, you go straight to it, and locate the door-knob by the keyhole. Peyton, you keep on his left; I will keep on his right. When I say, 'NOW,' Bohan will open the door, spring in and cover Cecil with his revolver. I will jump in on his right, you, Peyton, on his left. Don't any one shoot unless Cecil opens up. If the man is crazy there is danger; but, I think not."

Slowly they crawled across the floor to the library door.

"Ready, Bohan?" whispered Johnson. "All right? Then NOW!"

Swiftly Bohan turned the knob and whipped into the library. "Hands up, Mr. Cecil! No foolishness, now! Well, by jink-!" He gasped as his glance fell upon Cecil standing beside a large box, with a screw-driver in his hand.

"What do you fools want?" shouted Cecil, his black eyes buring upon them with a baleful glare. "What damnable impertinence is this of yours, Johnson?"

"Indeed Cecil!" drawled Johnson, "it seems as if the impudence were all your own, when you hide from the Law. You heard the summons; why did you flee? Pardon my curiosity, but what have you there in that box?"

Cecil's tall figure straightened; he threw his head back haughtily, but some sudden thought checked the retort upon his lips. With a groan he collapsed into a chair, his face in his hands.

The others gazed at him with an undefinable, unreasonable sympathy. Despite all the possible horror behind the matter, he had from them the recognition due a fellowman suffering under dire affliction, even though it were his own fault.

Presently Cecil regained his self-control. He raised his haggard face, his eyes riveted upon the box before him. Only the ticking of a distant clock broke the silence that chained the others to their places with a haunting sense of mystery. The air itself seemed surcharged with boding tragedy, overladen with human pain and suffering.

A square of paper lying on a Turkish rug near his own foot caught Johnson's eye He stooped down and picked it up. It was covered with huge red characters, printed English letters, each one distinct, yet following each other in such a fashion as to be a mere farrago of nonsense. It read:

NSIOTPSDGT
GTTWKEEEOH
XISSNNRNLE.

"A cryptogram!" said Peyton, looking over Johnson's shoulder. "Let me look at it. I amused myself awhile at college with such things, after reading Poe's essay on ciphers."

"Where did this come from, Cecil?" asked Johnson.

"What? Oh! that—it—a—came in that box!" muttered Cecil.

Johnson looked at him curiously. "What is in there? Better let me see."

"Nothing!" burst out Cecil. "What the deuce do I know about it all, anyway?" he added, brushing back the damp hair from his forehead. "Here is how it is: About two hours ago I was coming down from a call on the Shore Drive. As I was passing the Newberry Library, some man brushing by me spoke to me; in fact I fancied that he followed me to the Club, though I am not sure. I had been in the Club ten minutes when I was called to the telephone by some one whose voice I remember, though to save me, I cannot just now recall whose it is. The caller told me that there was a valuable package for me on my veranda; and, what instantly arrested my attention, she (it was a woman) went on to say that it concerned my missing papers."

He knitted his brows in anger. "You gentlemen may know, as does all my world in England, that there is a bar sinister upon my own escutcheon," he added bitterly, his face flushing. "At least they think so still, over on the other side of the pond; though, young as I then was, I remember distinctly what my mother told me on her deathbed.

"The orphan daughter of a landless, almost penniless, squire in Westshire, she had, at the age of only seventeen, made a run-away match with the late Duke of Westshire. They were married in London by a former curate, who had been unfrocked for misbehavior by his bishop,—a fact then unknown to my poor mother, but only too well known to the duke. A male cousin of hers, to whose house she had gone in that city, had seen, however, that all the other due forms of law were observed; and, eminent British lawyers have assured me that could my mother's marriage certificate be recovered and proved, that my prima facie case would be converted into a conclusive one at law.

"However, to resume, I will say that, after a brief honeymoon, the duke deserted my mother, though he provided liberally for her maintenance, through his attorneys, especially after I was born.

"Two years later he married again, though my mother was still living, very quietly in retirement, bowed down with the shame of the duke's repudiation of his marriage with her. By this second wife, a daughter of a peer, he had three boys. The eldest was just twelve years old, when, on the family's way back from the Riviera one spring, they and the duke were caught in a frightful wreck on the Paris limited. His wife and children were imprisoned under the mass of wreckage, and before they could be rescued, they were consumed by the flames that burst out almost immediately. The duke's hair turned gray that awful night in which he saw destroyed, all his hopes, affections, and ambitions. He was the last of his house; and no male heir was left to inherit his titles, of which he was, even to the last, inordinately vain.

"Possibly it was this terrible calamity that aroused his remorse or superstition concerning the deadly wrong he had done my mother. He sent me to Oxford, settled a large annuity upon me, invited me frequently to visit him, and forced his titled friends to receive me as his son, albeit on the left side. Indeed, during his last years, he often hinted to me that full justice and atonement should be mine, some day. After his death, however, no legal evidence thereof was forthcoming, vastly to my regret—regret not for my own sake, but for my mother's even though she had died years before. I had an ample income and moved among the smartest set over there, but the thought of the burden of grief which had ruined her life always weighed heavily upon me.

"I should have said, before, that there were reasons, good reasons, besides the maunderings of the duke in his dotage, for my believing that the certificate and other papers relating to me, were still in existence. This I learned from the former governess of the duke's children whom he had maintained in his service, especially as his failing health required the almost constant attendance of a nurse."

Cecil paused a moment then resumed: "That governess you gentlemen have known as Helen Clayton. You see, I was quite young then, when I first met Helen—only that was not her real name; that was Olive Boughton. She was the daughter of a cousin of the duke's second wife; and was somewhat older than I was, little as you may think it. But I was only a young sub in the Guards, then, and was flattered at the liking shown me by such a beautiful woman. Altogether, it was a very mild affair; and, like a boy, I soon grew tired of what was to me but a harmless flirtation. As I found out later, to my deep regret, it was not such to Olive; she was in deadly earnest. This sounds caddish, but it is the truth.

"On one of my later visits to the duke at his seat at Wyndham-Towers, urged by the reckless ways of youth and its crazy love of adventure (and fast city-life had been added to my wildness), I ran across a girl near there, the daughter of one of the duke's tenants. She was a strange gipsy-like creature, with dark eyes and hair; indeed, I heard that her mother had been a gipsy, and the Romany strain showed in the dare-devil eyes and brown skin of her daughter, Berenthine."

(Concluded next week.)

* * *

### Didn't Appreciate Her Singing.

"Why doesn't your wife sing to the baby when it cries?"

"'Sh! We've found out that the neighbors would rather listen to the baby."

*

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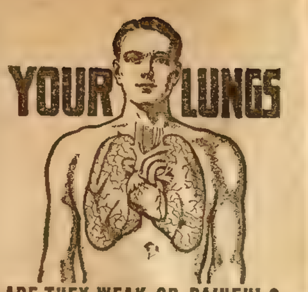

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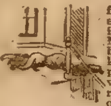

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## The Queen's Signet.

(Continued from page nine.)

"Tell me, what does London think of the return of the Queen's signet?" he inquired eagerly.

"There are all sorts of rumors. You hear them from Cheape to Fleet and everywhere. It is well known that Noel restored the ring, and in doing so he has gained the ill will of the Queen's foes. Report hath it that a lot of guardsmen tried to arrest him, but he sent them off with sore heads."

"Good!" cried Harle. "I would like to give Neville my hand on that."

"Then you bear him no ill will?"

"None at all, Captain. A man who can best Harle the Hawk at his own game commands his respect. I think I shall become Noel's ally."

This was not to the Captain's liking, but he made no comment.

"I shall go down to London this night," continued Harle. "My hurt is nothing when there is good adventure in the air. It makes my blood leap in my veins. Can you meet me at the Cross and Anchor at twelve tonight?"

"I'll be there," promised Brass.

"Who does report say wanted to arrest Noel?

"It was the King's warrant, but you know, Harle, that many a poor fellow is committed to the Tower without Charles' knowledge. 'Tis said that the Red Duchess hath many a warrant in her desk."

"I see," nodded Harle. "If I could lay my hands on her grace there would be an addition to my treasure. She rides out but little I am told."

"Only to the fetes, and then under guard. She might be present at Lady Buckingham's party this night."

"This night, say you?" cried Harle, with a start. "At Buckingham Palace, no doubt?"

"Yes."

When Captain Brass took his departure, it was under a renewed promise to meet Harle at the Cross and Anchor. He was prompt to the second, and found the king of the road, masked at one of the tables, secure from common observation.

"I have had my ears open since I dropped into this nest," smiled Harle, after the greeting. "We shall have find sport ere morning."

"What is in the wind now?"

"The sheen of gems and the curses of my red bird."

Captain Brass affected not to comprehend.

"I have discovered that Noel Neville is still at large," continued the cutpurse. "It was Castlemain's men who tried to take him."

"Just as I suspected."

"Not only this, but some of her henchmen tried to find him at Temple House, but they were circumvented by the fair Rosamond, who is surely a chip of the old block. She let them search the house, but covered them with the point of her rapier, and the louts were glad to get away unpricked."

"Good for the pretty wench!" cried Brass, clapping his hands.

"I learnt all this since coming here, for one of the guards sat at yonder table, and being pretty well soaked with sack, told the story of their adventures to his companions."

At last Harle turned his mug upside down and leaned across the table.

"We shall teach the Red Duchess a lesson," said he, lowering his voice. "There is a little stretch of unlighted road between Buckingham Palace and Whitehall. No doubt my Lady Castlemain will have it lighted by flambeaux, for she has no liking for gentlemen who ply their vocation by night. I have friendly feelings for Queen Catherine, and had not Noel winged me I would have had the pleasure of invading the palace and returning the royal signet with my own hands."

"A risky business, Harle."

"No risks, no victories," laughed the highwayman. "I don't ask you to risk your precious neck tonight, but I want to show you how rich birds lose their feathers."

Ten minutes later the pair rose and quitted the place, Harle wrapping his cloak closer about his trim figure, and Captain Brass treading at his heels.

Buckingham Palace was a good mile from Whitehall, a great stately pile which had been built by blood money, and that wrenched from the people of England. Buckingham was the King's close friend and the foremost enemy of the Queen, whom he hated with all the intensity of his evil nature. His duchess shared his hatred, and nothing pleased the couple better than to have fetes at their palace to the pleasures of which Queen Catherine was never invited. At all these fetes Lady Castlemain shone forth in a blazonry of jewels.

It was after midnight when two figures reached a certain spot in the road between Buckingham Palace and Whitehall, and drew aside to a secluded bit of ground underneath a great tree.

"Here is where we despoil the bird," said one, in low tones. "Some of these fowls have too many fine feathers, and they must contribute now and then to Harle's treasury."

A half-mask hung over the speaker's face, and from behind it came the light of a pair of merry eyes that seemed to dance with anticipation.

The hours crept away, but the forms at the tree did not stir. The moon sank to rest, and a cool wind came up from the Thames and toyed with the curling locks of the masked wearer.

"They come at last!" he suddenly cried. "Dost hear the warbling of the bird, Captain?"

"I hear a woman's laughter," was the reply.

As certain sounds increased, Harle the Hawk drew a pistol from beneath his doublet and examined the priming.

"What if the King rides with the Red Duchess?" queried Captain Brass, in tones of misgiving.

"Then King Charlie will witness the plucking," was the reply, and Harle gazed down the road where the light of flambeaux could be discerned.

In a few moments a calash came abreast of the couple, and they saw that it was guarded by four men, two of whom carried the lights. Everybody knew Lady Castlemain's turnout, for there was no duplicate in the whole realm.

Harle touched his companion lightly on the arm and nodded

"A lonely spot this," said a woman's voice. "What a place for Harle the Hawk or a Jack Sheppard."

"Yes, my lady, but the King has rid the roads of many of these plunderers who have ended their careers on Tyburn Hill."

"It is the King," whispered Captain Brass.

"Were it the devil he should see the fun of tonight," was the fearless reply.

All at once Harle the Hawk threw himself forward, and his voice stilled the sounds of merriment within the vehicle.

"Stand, my good fellows!"

In another second he was beside the calash and his weapon was grinning at its occupants. Captain Brass was covering the white-faced servants.

"The compliments of the road!" cried Harle. "Long life to your sacred majesty, but your necklace, Duchess!"

Lady Castlemain sank back with a terrified groan.

"Quick!" continued Harle, and while she hesitated his left hand shot forward, and seizing the precious necklace of pearls, he wrenched it loose and dropped it dexterously into his pocket.

"You'll get other feathers, my ladybird," he laughed. "Perchance some day you'll find the Queen's signet! Goodnight and merry years, my Duchess!"

The favorite shrieked over her loss, and as Harle bounded away he heard from the calash the loud laughter of the Merry Monarch. As for Arabella, she stormed as she had never stormed before.

This extremely interesting story will be continued in next week's Ledger, presenting the readers with some very strange happenings. If you are not a subscriber to the Ledger, you are strongly urged to send in your subscription at once. Every family should take the Ledger, as humor and stories and pictures make life brighter and pleasanter for all, bringing health and entertainment and doing every one good. Be wise and attend to this today.

❧ ❧ ❧

## A Champ Clark Story.

"They are going the wrong way about it," said Champ Clark at a banquet in Bowling Green, of a tax that he opposed. "They remind me, in this expensive scheme for raising revenue, of Mrs. Calhoun Webster.

"'Cal,' said Mrs. Webster one lovely morning in early spring, 'I wish you'd save up your money and get a biplane or a monoplane.'

"'What for?' the astonished Calhoun Webster asked.

"'Oh,' said his wife, 'we need so many things this summer—hats and harem skirts and new carpets and talking machines, and so on—and winning aeroplane prizes seems such a quick way to earn money.'"

❧ ❧ ❧

## Domestic Fashion.

Stella—Is it a one-piece frock?

Bella—No; she told me herself that it includes three pieces of her husband's mind.

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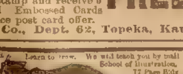

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I want a letter from every man and woman in America afflicted with Rheumatism, Lumbago or Neuralgia, giving me their name and address, so I can send each one *Free A One Dollar Bottle* of my Rheumatic Remedy. I want to convince every Rheumatic sufferer at my expense that my Rheumatic Remedy does what thousands of so-called remedies have failed to accomplish—*ACTUALLY CURES RHEUMATISM.* I know it does, I am sure of it and I want every Rheumatic sufferer to know it and be sure of it, before giving me a penny profit. You cannot *coax* Rheumatism out through the feet or skin with plasters or cunning metal contrivances. You cannot *tease* it out with liniments, electricity or magnetism. You cannot *imagine* it out with mental science. *You Must Drive It Out.* It is in the blood and you must *Go After It and Get It.* This is just what Kuhn's Rheumatic Remedy does and that's why it cures Rheumatism. Rheumatism is Uric Acid and Uric Acid and Kuhn's Rheumatic Remedy cannot live together in the same blood. *The Rheumatism has to go and it does go.* My Remedy cures the sharp, shooting pains, the dull, aching muscles, the hot, throbbing, swollen limbs, and cramped, stiffened, useless joints, *and cures them quickly.*

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# A CHILD-WIFE'S CRIME;
## *Or, A HUSBAND'S JEALOUSY*
### By ADRIENNE ROUCOLLE

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Begun in No. 50, Dec. 16. Subscriptions can begin with that issue, or back copies can be obtained from news stands, our agents, or by mail from the office of publication.

### CHAPTER XII.
### PUNISHMENT!

CHARLEY WARREN, faithful to the ethics of a man deeply in love, had hurried through business as fast as possible. Then, much to the disgust of the cowboy who was to accompany him home,, he had insisted on leaving at once for the ranch, riding the forty-nine miles with only a stop of three hours to rest and feed the ponies and eat their own supepr. A little after midnight, as the two men were riding along at that gentle trot which tires neither horse nor man, Warren, lost in his waking dreams, had forgotten the presence of his companion, when suddenly he was brought back to realities by an exclamation from the young cowboy.

"Say, can you make out what that red glow and smoke back in the trees means?" the young man asked.

Warren looked up. "It looks like a fire," he began. Then, with sudden emotion, he added uneasily, "It is in the direction of the ranch."

"So it is," answered his companion.

The flames, now leaping high above the treetops, seemed to act as beacon to the two men, as though Providence wished to call human aid to the rescue of Taylor and the two women now in the hands of the enemy.

"The ranch is burning!" cried Warren, as he buried his spurs in the animal's flanks, causing him to leap forward in a frightened gallop, his companion doing likewise. The two men were soon racing madly through the forest and clearing, demanding the utmost of their horses.

When they reached the opening of the forest, the appalling sight of the flaming buildings and corrals greeted their eyes. With an unconscious movement, Warren drew rein suddenly, stunned by the sight. As he did so, a faint call for help, coming from some shrubs to the left of him, caused him to leap from his horse and rush to the spot from whence the call had come. Thus did he find the cowboy who had been wounded when he and his companions had made the desperate rush for help.

"Bill!" cried Charley, dropping on his knees by the wounded man, the light from the fire enabling him to recognize the cowboy.

"Charley!" weakly answered the other. "Whisky!"

The other cowboy now joined them, anxious, feeling that something terrible had happened during their absence.

"Got any whisky?" asked the foreman, guessing that the wounded man could not speak without the stimulant.

"Sure," was the answer, as the young man handed a half-full bottle from which he had drawn the cork.

Warren brought it to the white lips, the man drinking eagerly. In an instant he was revived, and the foreman, his throat dry with anxiety, asked: "What has happened?"

"The Indians attacked us, firing the building."

"Indians!" the two listeners exclaimed in astonishment."

"They were dressed like Indians, but since I have had time to think, I am beginning to believe that that was only a disguise, as they neither spoke nor acted like redskins."

"Where's Taylor?"

"Captured."

"And the girls!" There was a world of anxiety in Warren's voice.

"Captured with him."

"My God!"

"Two of our boys have escaped and have gone for help."

"Joe, look after Bill. I must go to the rescue." Warren had leaped to his feet, suddenly calm and determined.

"If I were you, Charley, I'd wait a little," suggested the wounded man, as the foreman was hurrying to his horse. "The boys will be back with help. They've been gone sometime. You can do nothing single-handed, for there are over a dozen men left with the attacking party, though we must have killed half a dozen before our ammunition gave out."

"But this inactivity will kill me!" cried Warren, though he saw that the wounded man was right.

"Better that than get killed. Dead people are of no help to the living," said Bill, after taking another drink of whisky.

"You're right, Joe. Dress Bill's wounds, while I go see what is to be done."

Warren walked on toward the still blazing buildings, stooping to look at the faces of the dead, seeing at a glance that though they were disguised as Indians, they belonged to the white race. Coming to the spot where Ramona lay, he stooped to look at her as he had done at the others. He started back with a cry, as he recognized the old hag whom he had so often seen during Dolores' trial, the whole truth flashing on his consciousness in a second.

"The Mexican!" he cried.

The very eminence of the danger cleared his brain in a second. He thought fast and furiously, planning out in a second the rescue and the punishment of the guilty. Returning to the wounded cowboy, he asked: "Did you see in what direction they went when they took away the prisoners?"

"Yes. I had just returned to consciousness, and I was creeping here to shelter when they decided to leave at once, fearing that Jack and Pete, who had managed to escape, would spread the alarm."

"Where did they go?"

"Into the forest to the left of the house."

"The direction of Mexico! Are you strong enough to give a message from me to those who come to the rescue?"

"Sure."

"No danger of your fainting?"

"No, I don't think I'm badly wounded."

"Joe, catch two fresh ponies and saddle them. Hurry!"

While Joe went to carry out the order, Warren took Bill up in his arms and carried him out into the open to the foot of the big oak back of which Miguel had hidden during the fight. Setting him down with his back resting against the trunk of the tree he said:

"You can command a better view of all sides from here." Then he went from one body to the other, collecting guns and ammunition. Returning to the tree, he sat down by the wounded man, saying as he began loading the guns, "I can work as I give my instructions."

"Wish I could help."

"Save your strength, I have plenty time while Joe gets the horses. Listen. When the boys get here, you tell them that Joe and I have gone on ahead as pathfinders—that we will leave marks behind to indicate the road followed. They must follow us as rapidly as possible. as we will make no direct attack upon the enemy until they join us, unless of course, there is an immediate need for action."

"I understand. But how can you see their tracks in the dark, or the boys yours?"

"Dawn will be here shortly, and the fire will light us for a considerable distance. My idea is that the Mexican is making for the border, thinking his government will give him protection against us. We therefore must overtake them before they cross over to Mexico."

Joe returned at this moment with the fresh ponies. Charley had finished reloading the guns by this time, so, rising, he said to Bill: "You understand what you're to tell the boys?"

"Sure, Mike."

"Then so long. We'll be back as soon as we have either rescued or avenged. We will send you help the first chance we get."

"Don't mind me. I'll stick it out all right."

Giving half the weapons secured from the dead to Joe, Warren put two in his belt beside his own, and placed the others in the saddlebags, Joe doing the same with his. Thus equipped, the two men leaped in saddle, and with a last farewell to Bill, made off in the direction taken by Lopez and his men, finding it easy to track them by the glare of the still brightly burning buildings. Entering the forest, they were still able to follow, the number of horses making the tracks distinct in the soft soil of the forest path.

Charley had guessed correctly. Lopez' plan was to reach Mexican soil before he finished carrying out his revenge. He therefore bent every energy to reach the border before help came to the prisoners, as he knew it soon would, since two of Taylor's men had escaped to spread the alarm. He therefore urged men and horses to the fastest speed that a forest path, narrow and circling among the trees, would allow. Irene and Taylor bore up bravely, feeling sure that help would come, but Dolores, conscious that she was the direct cause of the trouble, and knowing Miguel's revengeful nature and inhuman cruelty, was completely crushed. She was afraid to pray, feeling, in the blind superstition due to her bringing up, that her marriage to Taylor, in spite of its platonic nature, had called the curse of Heaven upon her head and upon the two she loved—Irene and Taylor. So she rode on, crushed, despairing, failing to experience fatigue, because all physicial senses were numbed by the overpowering agony of the soul.

With morning they came out of the forest and began ascending a steep hill. Miguel ordered Pedro to ride on ahead and see if he could not secure eatables from a ranch a little to the left of them. Pedro did as he was bid. Returning with the food purchased, his face was naturally turned toward the forest they had just left. Suddenly he saw two horsemen galloping out from the trees into the open. These were followed a second later by twenty or more horsemen, the two groups making toward them

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on the dead run. In a second he understood what this meant, and spurring his horse, he reached Miguel's side saying in Spanish:

"We haven't a minute to lose. They're on our tracks, not five miles distant."

"Caramba!" cursed Miguel. Then regaining his calm, he spoke to the men who surrounded him and the prisoners. "We must go on," he said. "We can eat only when we are out of danger."

Dolores had overheard Pedro's warning, and her heart bounded with hope, only to stop beating the next minute, as seizing on Miguel's set face she read thereon their death warrant. Taylor had also understood from the actions, and later the orders given, that help was near, and he had sent a look of encouragement to Dolores, only to meet with a look of mute and hopeless despair. Then, turning to his sister, he found that she, too, had understood, and that hope had returned in a joyous flood to her heart, telling her that Charley Warren would do all in human power to rescue his sweetheart.

Urging the tired horses to their best speed, Miguel had the party continue the ascent. Midway up the mountain they reached a road which crossed the one they were following. Miguel, who had been figuring on how to carry out his vengeance and yet escape his pursuers, saw in three roads going in as many different directions a chance to lessen the strength of the enemy. He called a halt, then divided his party into three groups, keeping the prisoners, Pedro, and four other men with him, but leaving Irene in another group. Seeing this, Pedro, said as he cast a lustful look upon the maiden: "You said you gave me the girl."

"You can have her when we meet again on Mexican soil," answered Miguel, impatiently

"I don't see it that way," asserted Pedro. "She comes with me, or I go with her. Choose!"

Angry, yet realizing that he must yield, as he did not wish to be without his right-hand man, Miguel snarled viciously

"Have your way, though you'll find she'll make trouble for us." Then seeing that all this was causing him to lose time, he ordered: "You Donbreza, take charge of your group and go off to the left, being careful to leave plenty of marks and tracks behind. You, Essin[illegible], continue the road we were following, and all of you fight to the last ditch, as lynching awaits those who are captured alive."

The men made off rapidly, determined to escape the enemy; then Miguel and his men turned down to the right with the three prisoners. They rode thus for half an hour at a breakneck speed. Then, at a sudden turn of the road, they came upon railroad tracks, with a rough frame building, evidently a station, about a mile down the valley. Struck by an idea, Miguel drew rein so suddenly as to cause his steed to rear in the air. He had just hit upon the vengeance he wanted, and which he feared the pursuing party back of him would not give him the leisure to accomplish. Ordering two men to ride out ahead, he kept two with him and Pedro. Riding up the canyon along the track, he paused at a sudden bend of the road and called a halt. A tree stood near the tracks. To this he ordered the men to bind Dolores, who, too frightened to move, and believing that the end was near, did not offer the least resistance. Not so, Taylor. Struggling madly but uselessly to break the bounds which held him, he cursed and raved, thinking that he was going to be made the witness of Dolores' death. Irene, though frightened, still hoped, feeling sure that Charley was drawing near. She began screaming for help, wildly, shrilly, the sound of her voice echoing throughout the mountain gorge.

"Silence her, fool!" called out Miguel to Pedro.

The young Mexican hurried to the screaming girl, drew her down from her horse, and covered her mouth with his hand. She struggled madly, tearing herself from his hold, screaming again several times before he could overpower her.

While Pedro was struggling with Irene, Miguel had ordered the men to bind Taylor hand and foot, and tie him securely to the track, so that it would be impossible for him to roll over out of danger. The men obeyed mechanically and without question, being too hardened criminals to hesitate before such a crime. They worked simply for the reward promised, knowing that it would be greater in proportion to the crime.

Dolores, realizing what was Miguel's intention, had partly recovered her strength, and she, too, began to scream for help as Irene had done. Like Irene she was soon gagged, as was Taylor. Then Miguel, calm, sure of his vengeance, satisfied with the tortures he would inflict, mounted his horse.

"Now to reach safety," he cried, and he gave the example by putting his horse at a full gallop.

Pedro, not wishing to leave Irene behind, took her, still struggling, across his horse, and rode after the others. As he reached the main road down which his companions were fleeing, Charley Warren and a dozen cowboys and ranchmen came into sight, riding like mad. They shouted an order to Pedro to stop. Then, as he did not obey, they fired at the animal, fearing to wound the girl if they shot at him. The pony fell dead in his tracks, and rider and prisoner rolled to the ground. The next minute Warren was lifting Irene in his arms, while his companions covered Pedro with their guns. The girl was only dazed by the fall, her senses returning as she saw her sweetheart's face.

"Saved!" cried Warren, as he cut the girl's bonds and removed the gag, forgetting in the joy of the reunion both the fleeing Miguel and the two other prisoners.

But the shrill whistle of a train, pausing for a few minutes at the little station down the valley, recalled Irene to the tragic reality. With a hoarse cry of horror and despair, she started up toward the spot where Miguel had caused Taylor to be bound to the track, crying: "My brother!"

The others followed, leaving only one man behind to watch over the captured Pedro. On they ran, until at the bend of the road they came upon the unconscious Dolores tied to the tree and Taylor outstretched upon the rail, with the train just steaming out of the station below. With a curse of rage, Charley, followed by the others, rushed forward to rescue Taylor, working fast and furiously to cut the cords, while Irene, having recovered her presence of mind, had torn off her skirt, and was flagging the train now rapidly advancing toward the curve Thus Taylor and Dolores were rescued, returning to San Diego on the very train which had come very near being the death of both, for Dolores would never have survived the death of the man she had learned to love so deeply.

Three days later, Charley joined Taylor and the two girls in San Diego, announcing to them that they would never again need to fear Miguel and his Mexican vendetta, as the cowboys, incensed over what he had done, had taken justice in their own hands, and had lynched both him and his accomplice, Pedro.

Upon hearing this, Dolores threw herself into Taylor's arms crying: "At last I can really be yours!"

Those of the men who had helped Lopez, and who had not been killed in the fight which preceded their capture, were brought back to San Diego, where, after a trial which created a great stir because of the romance it brought to light, they were sentenced each to several years in the penitentiary. As to Charley Warren, he had his reward for his part in the rescue, for three months after the burning of the ranch he became Taylor's partner and Irene's husband.

The end.

* * *

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BOYS'
AND
GIRLS'
CORNER

# Hunting a Firebug;

## Or, CHASING A LOST WILL

### By J. M. MERRILL

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## CHAPTER I.

## HUNTING THE FIREBUG.

"RUN, Billy run!" And Billy did run like a weasel. He imagined he saw a giant in pursuit. Possibly it was but a figment of an excited brain; there is no telling.

"My, but I was scared!" breathed Billy Gabbs, sitting down on a log.

"I was pretty close to it myself," returned his companion. "That there Moses chap's got lots of helpers in these woods, and they do say he'd as soon shoot as not."

"Well, I for one ain't going to set myself up for a target. Let's get out of the woods, Till. I'm sick of hunting outlaws, ain't you?"

"Not me," with a laugh.

"I should think you'd be, Till Trodden. Your folks are rich enough, anyhow, so the reward's no object."

"All the more reason for me to want to get the reward. My folks don't give me a red cent of money 'less I earn it."

"Stingy, eh?"

"No, not exactly stingy."

"I'd call it that. Now, Aunt Sally Diggs gives me a dime now and then, and she takes in washing for a living. No stingy hairs in her head, by gosh!"

The two boys sat eying the woods about them, somewhat fearful of an apparition bursting into view at any moment.

"I'll tell ye, Billy," suddenly said the tall Till, "that reward would set me up in business down to Gildwater. I've the promise of a good deal there if I can raise five hundred."

"And this reward for the firebug is one thousand, Till."

"Precisely, Billy—five hundred apiece for you and me."

"I'm hungry."

The fat boy pulled a package from under his coat and opened it out on the log between them—bread, meat, and pickles.

"The Widow Diggs is a good cook all right, Billy," praised the tall boy, as he partook with his chum of the food provided. "I ought to have fetched along some grub myself, but I forgot it. D'ye think we're going to make good, Billy?"

"I'm afraid not."

After finishing their meal, Till drew a folded paper from his pocket, spread it out on his knee, and read it for the third time that day, the offer of a reward for the capture and conviction of one Moses Bunker, supposed incendiary and all-around crook.

There had been forest fires, buildings burned, and mischief done of a nature to stamp the doer of ill as a most vindictive person.

Moses Bunker got the credit for being this evil-disposed being. Whether boy or man was something not fully established. Few had seen the firebug, only everybody knew of the fires, of fields laid waste, vast stretches of timber destroyed and homes reduced to smoking ruins. Moses Bunker was the bete noir of the ruin wrought. Glimpses of the outlaw had been caught now and then by frightened women and scared children.

"I'd like to get my eye on the beast once," said tall Till.

"You'd fall in a fit if you did," laughed the fat youth.

"Bosh——"

"Don't be so sure," rasped Billy Gabbs. "I know the fellow's a giant, bigger'n the one that Jack killed in the story book."

"Mose Bunker a giant?"

"That's what I said."

"That's all guff. Why, I know lots of fellers who've seen him—he's jest a boy like you'n' me, Billy.

"I don't believe that."

"I know it."

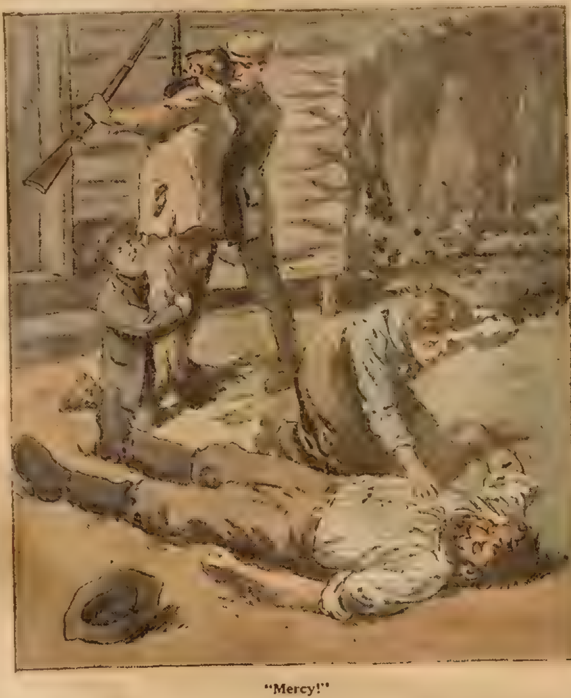
"You're a wise guy all right," admitted the other, "but you needn't tell me that jest a boy could raise such a rumpus as this Moses has done. He's as big as Goliath of old, that's what he's. It'll be safer for us to give up the [illegible] If men can't find him, what can [illegible]?"

The plaintive helplessness of [illegible] comrade disgusted Till Trodden. Billy Gabbs had been as bold as a lion at the outset. He had even been the one to suggest this hunt for the firebug. Now, when they were likely at any minute to run upon the follow, Billy was showing the white feather.

"You can go back if you like," said Till, folding his poster, returning it to his pocket.

"You know I won't do that, Till."

"Well, you talk that way, anyhow. Where are Skid and the rest of the bunch?"



"Mercy!"

"Skid Way, Rush Faster, and Hoof Horne went down the river, thinking to cut off Bunker's retreat in that direction," said Billy, wiping his mouth with his sleeve.

"Just as if the fellow was trying to run the country."

"Well, that's what the sheriff thinks he's doing."

"I don't agree with Sheriff Spile."

"You don't, Till?"

"Sure I don't This Bunker chap's lurking about in the woods. Why he should burn up so much property puzzles me. He certainly must be off his nut."

"He's just an ordinary thief, that's why. Of course——"

"Of course he's nothing of the kind. He's extraordinary, an escaped lunatic in my way of thinking, that's why he is so cunning and so dangerous."

"He's dangerous all right enough. He robbed two houses down Link Hollow way only two days ago, besides frightening two women out of their wits. I tell you, Till, we're up against it——"

"Don't make a monkey of yourself, Billy," jeered the tall boy, getting to his feet. "I see a smoke over yonder. I'll bet we find the firebug starting a new one. Let's hurry, and maybe we'll catch him in the act."

Tall Till walked rapidly from the spot, followed rather hesitatingly by his fat chum. Each boy carried a gun. Till's was a short muzzle-loader, while Billy carried his father's old army musket, a breech-loading Springfield.

"Come on," called tall Till, breaking into a run.

Billy Gabbs followed as best he could, his short [illegible] pounding the air like the arms of a fly-wheel.

Soon they broke into a clearing in the woods. Twenty rods away blazed a log dwelling. The roof had already fallen in, and a man and girl were working lustily with pails of water trying to extinguish the fire.

The girl was tall and slender, about fourteen, with a tangle of golden hair falling across her flushed cheek.

"Mercy! Here's work for us!" yelled Till Trodden, racing across the open with the fleetness of a deer.

Billy Gabbs brought up the rear, puffing like a winded horse. Both boys reached the scene of the fire at about the same time. The man turned on them with a scowl.

"What do you know about this?" he demanded sharply.

"It looks like your house was a goner, [illegible]," answered Till.

"Lay hold and help, will you?"

"You bet we will."

Placing their guns at a safe distance, the boys went to work with a will. The girl and fat Billy fetched water from a near-by creek, while the man and Till Trodden flung it on the flames.

A half-hour of desperate work sufficed to save the house in a scarred condition. The man, a stout, youngish old man, turned on the boys with profuse apologies and warm thanks.

"My home would have been destroyed sure if you two lads hadn't come in the

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time," declared the man, his flushing with feeling. "Tell names, please."

vs did this half-bashfully, for eyes of the girl were on them. Flight was an extremely pretty though her face was stained red from perspiration.

right, Mr. Flight," assured am glad we happened in the hood at the right time."

vere hunting?"

said Billy, grinning, "hunting a

on o such animals in these n the Neva, knocking the hot underst. a broken mopstick, the order at the same time. and he all were fixed on her, agement to a look of in fire?" asked he, r. Then, turn d that she, to on." hope had ret and glared sharply er heart, te ren would do that been going on his s try," declared Trodden. the same fellow set your

Mi " agreed Mr. Flight. were down the creek a g for huckleberries, when a smoke which hastened our re- ome one ran into the woods nder as we approached. As the burning I had no time to look man, or boy—I think it was the

ow it is too late," said Billy. all start an investigation, any-

ea," agreed Till. "My chum been trailing a firebug y since morning, a feller Bunker——"

nker'"

started and seemed very much Both our boy friends noticed wondered at it.

you know Mose?" suggested ning.

I do."

n sighed heavily, and sat down of the chairs which had been from the burning house. He a red and yellow handkerchief ped his hot face. He sat for e in a thoughtful attitude.

about this Moses, anyhow, Mr. finally questioned Till Trodden. rely know him?"

w of him," assented the man. all do that," in a disappointed

ht say I know him in a casual oceeded Mr. Flight. "He worked woods one winter where I was." you must know him quite well," making eyes at the girl.

o very well," explained the man. e, he was a strange, quiet boy; to have something on his mind. really understood Moses Bunker. the camp about midwinter, and see him again."

s moment Neva uttered a cry ng to her feet, running to the er father. A dark form broke from beyond the house, a stout trampish-looking youth in s, bearing a gun in each hand— rms lately owned by Billy and

I reckon I've got you fellers!" e stranger, leveling Billy's long t the heads of the group. "Shell before I blow your heads off!" Don't shoot!" screamed Neva. boy fell over upon the ground, an crawling behind Flight and ghter. Till faced the tramp flinching. He was slightly pale e mouth, yet determined not fear.

## CHAPTER II.

## MISSING MOSES.

se guns!" ordered Till. or I'll shoot!" bellowed the "Up with your hands! I money. Shell out or die!"

ish-looking youth had the n and boys. As for Neva, t the feet of her father. aced the robber with white ornful brow. He did not ve the fellow would shoot. ad, however, been known to rder for pelf before now, and ad a most forbidding look.

ose guns," again commanded beying the other's order to s hands.

u'd ruther die than to obey ed the tramp, cocking one of "D'ye know who I am?"

do I care."

me Flight asserted himself t the gunbearer, intent on m to the ground. He was enough, however. The tramp own the butt of the rifle across f the man, laying him sense- ground.

Neva uttered a wild cry of

killed papa!" she wailed.

rowful outcry roused the fat airy. With a growl of indig- whirled over and over, roll- t the feet of the tramp. With about the fellow's legs Billy his attention from the others.

you now!" screamed Gabbs. al scuffle ensued, ending in iscomfiture of the tramp, who owered and felled to the During the battle, in which tall Till mixed with frenzied fury, the musket was discharged, causing Neva to scream again, this time because of a wound on her own person.

Things were badly mixed up.

"Go for a rope," commanded Till, who sat astride the tramp's legs. Billy being free, ran to the rear of the house, tore a small rope from the clothes posts, and hastened back. With this the offensive tramp was securely bound, after which Till and his friend turned their attention to the man and his pretty daughter.

Neva had been only slightly wounded by the bullet from Till's rifle—the skin cut across one hand. It was, however, a narrow escape. As for the girl's father, that was a different proposition. He still lay insensible on the ground

Till and Billy lifted and bore the man into the house, guided by Miss Flight. They laid him on his own bed, then began efforts at resuscitation.

Both lads were members of a boy scout organization, consequently they understood what to do in case of emergency.

The moment Mr. Flight opened his eyes and seemed on a fair way to complete recovery, the boys went out and dragged their prisoner into the woodshed, where they left him, while they returned to the inmates of the house.

The settler was still apparently dazed, and talked like one just awakened from a sound sleep.

"You got the fellow?" he asked, addressing Till.

"Yes, he's tied up like a broken leg in splints. We left him in the woodshed."

"When my head gets a little better I should like to question him," said Mr. Flight. "I am more than half convinced that he is the scoundrel who set fire to my house."

"Very likely," assented Till.

"After which he took it into his head to kill the whole family," grunted Billy Gibbs "Hully gee! but he's a tough one!"

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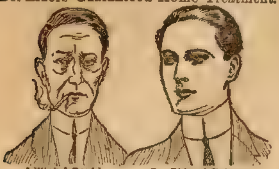
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Till thought of the paper in his pocket offering a reward for the firebug. What if this youthful tramp was the Moses Bunker for whom a hundred men were searching? The thought was worth considering.

Neva sat wide-eyed, regarding her father and the two boys who had come so opportunely to the aid of her parent.

Till turned a side glance at her. She was slim of form, with such fine eyes and gentle face. She attracted him strangely. He had never had a sister, and he felt like claiming this girl for one on the spot.

Meantime Fatty Gabbs got up and went out to the woodshed.

"Did you recognize the fellow as any one you had seen before?" queried Till, turning suddenly upon the settler.

"Did I?" with a sort of gasp. "It does seem as if I'd seen him somewhere."

"Try and think where it was, Mr. Flight."

But the man shook his head, saying, "I can't place him, nohow."

"Might he not be the man you knew in the woods that winter—Moses Bunker?"

"Moses Bunker was a boy younger than you sir," declared the man, screwing his features into a smile. "That was three years ago or thereabouts, so he must have grown a bit since."

"And this tramp would be about Bunker's size at the present time?"

"That's right," with a start.

"Don't you think this tramp may be he?"

"It's barely possible," hesitatingly. "You see, three years makes a lot of difference in a growing boy."

"Of course it does," agreed tall Till Trodden. "Now, if this chap proves to be the fellow we are looking for, then good luck has struck us at last."

"Why do you think so, sir?"

"Haven't you heard of the reward offered for Moses Bunker, dead or alive?"

"No," shaking his head. "You see I don't get out much. Don't often get a paper in here. What's he done?.'

"I thought I told you that he is a firebug for whom a thousand dollars reward has been offered."

"I forgot it if you did. My head aches enough to split. I reckon my brains are addled, anyhow. A thousand dollars! My goodness —"

"Where is your friend?" suddenly asked Miss Flight.

Man and boy gazed about them, neither having noticed the silent departure of Billy Gabbs. Neva said she saw him go out the back way.

"To the woodshed, of course," said Till.

"Gone to interview the prisoner, like as not," and Flight laughed grimly.

"A thing I am going to do myself," avowed the tall boy. Neva had preceded them to the woodshed, and now a startled scream greeted their ears as they advanced. Till sprang ahead, pushing into the woodshed to see Neva kneeling beside an object on the ground.

That object proved to be Billy, whose face was covered with blood

"Jehoshaphat! what's happened to the boy?" gasped Flight.

"He is killed!" and Neva Flight came staggering to her feet, white with a terrible fear. Till stood over his prostrate chum, gnawing his lips in silent anger and dismay.

"Where is the tramp?"

It was the settler who asked the question, and Till realized for the first time that the young outlaw had made good his escape. On the ground lay bits of the rope, cut to pieces with a sharp knife.

Till knelt on the spot from which the girl stepped at his approach. He hunted in vain for a wound on his friend. A thorough examination convinced him that Billy had been hit a heavy blow across the bridge of the nose, doubtless by the fist of the tramp, and that all the hemorrhage had been caused by the crushed veins in the nose.

Billy lay quiet while his chum made his examination. He breathed, however, so that Till was not particularly alarmed for his safety. A bit of note paper pinned to the fat lad's arm was eagerly grasped by the tall boy, who opened it to find a few words scrawled on the front page.

"It's hard to catch a weasel asleep! Good-by, kids. Look sharper next time when you seek to master a young scout of the woods. Although some folks hate and hunt me, they'll go far and fare slim before they trap Moses Bunker.—M. B."

"What is it, boy?" called the agitated Mr. Flight. "Read her out."

Till complied. The man clinched his hands and groaned.

"Outwitted by a boy!" he gasped.

"Yes, and that boy was the one we want—Moses Bunker, the firebug!" chimed in Till Trodden, in an angry outcry

At this moment Billy groaned and sat up. In a few minutes he would be as good as new, he declared.

"It was this way," he explained, when he had fully gathered his scattered senses. "When I came into the woodshed, that feller had got to his feet with a jackknife in his hand. How he got it beats me. He sprang at me. I dodged, but not quick enough. He fetched me a welt in the snoot that paralyzed me for a while. He got clean off, and with the cuss goes our hope of winning that thousand dollars."

"So you think he's our man, Billy?" asked Till.

"You bet I do."

"I think maybe he is right," sanctioned Mr. Flight.

The boys, accompanied by Mr. Flight, went outside and searched the vicinity without results. After half an hour of this sort of thing they all returned to the house. The corner in which the lads had placed their guns was empty.

"Where's the guns?" queried Billy.

"They stood in that corner when we went out," answered Neva.

"But now they are gone," growled Till Trodden.

"More work of missing Moses!" exclaimed Mr. Flight.

It was rather humiliating to be thus put upon by this cheeky young firebug. Both Till and Billy were exceedingly annoyed and angry.

Neva, who had gone into the front room, now came forth holding a shattered rosewood box in her hand. The moment Mr. Flight saw what his daughter held his face paled, while a great cry rose from his throat.

"Where did you get that, Neva?" cried the man

"It lay on the floor in front of the escritoire, papa," she answered.

"Then we have been robbed of precious papers!" wailed the man. "Quick, boys, help me find this missing Moses, or I am a ruined man!"

## CHAPTER III.

## THE FIREBUG'S DEFIANCE.

The situation was mystifying as well as startling. The boys were puzzled at the actions of the man whose house they had saved from destruction by fire. There was something mysterious about his actions and his references to Moses Bunker. There could be no doubt that this tramp was the firebug for whom the two boys were searching, and they were doubly anxious to effect his capture.

"We are undone, Neva," and the man leaned his forehead against a shelf and groaned aloud.

"Not so bad as all that, I hope," cheered tall Till Trodden. "Was the box of such value then?"

"The contents were valuable, not the box itself."

"What did it contain?"

"Valuable papers."

"Referring to property I suppose?"

"Yes, to property and to something of more importance still," assured Flight. "I wouldn't have lost those papers for ten thousand dollars."

"Gee, that's a lot of money!" chortled Billy.

"It's a mere bagatelle compared to other things," muttered Flight. Then he ran outside and began a hasty search of the ground about the house. The boys followed directly.

They soon discovered tracks leading toward the woods, which was distant some forty rods.

"If we only had our guns——"

"But that wretch stole both!" roared Billy, who was red with disgust and anger. "I wish we had him now. I don't think we'd do a thing to him, eh, Till?"

"That we wouldn't," assented the tall boy.

Mr. Flight approached, his face twitching with manifest trouble.

"Boys, can you keep a secret?" he asked, in apparent distress of mind.

"You bet we can," from Billy.

"You can trust us with your life, Mr. Flight," assured Till.

The man stood white and thoughtful for a moment, then pressed his hand to his brow and turned away.

"Will you not speak out, Mr. Flight?" asked Till, much affected at the troubled state of the settler's mind. "Maybe we can help you."

"Maybe you can." The man stood hesitating like one very much in doubt.

At length he turned toward the house, going there without another look or word for his new friends, who were very greatly puzzled, you may be sure.

"Queer-acting guy," remarked Billy

"He has something on his mind, Billy."

"I reckon he has."

"We ought to worm it out of him."

"Let's try it, anyhow, Till."

The two boys returned to the house They saw nothing of Flight, but Neva sat holding a piece of brown paper in her hands, her big violet eyes straining as they read lines scrawled across the page.

"What is it, miss?" asked Billy.

"Here, read it for yourself, Till."

The tall boy took the paper and read:

"You Boys:—What silly fools you be to think of capturing me. Why, I eat a dozen such suckers as you chaps every day for dinner. Run home, boys, and tell your mothers to see that you don't stray again or you may git hurt. I've got the guns and the old man's papers. Tra-la-la!—MOSES BUNKER."

"Such impudence! Gee, but wouldn't I like to get my hands on the guy once more!" growled Billy Gabbs. "Once more, oh, once more, Moses, and you'll wish you hadn't sassed your betters!"

The others did not feel like gushing.

Till folded the paper and secreted it carefully on his person, thinking it might come in handy some day. Mr. Flight had gone to his room and thrown himself on the bed in an agony of despair. His conduct was almost as puzzling to Neva as it was to the boys.

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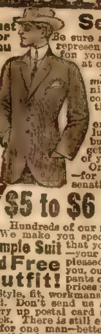

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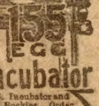

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"Papa seems awfully worked up," she said. "I wonder why."

"So do I," coincided the tall boy. "The loss of a few papers hadn't ought to affect a man like this."

"That's all you know about it!"

Out from his room came Mr. Flight, ruffling his hair with his fingers, swinging the other hand in clinched agony through the air. His face was twitching and distorted, his eyes bloodshot. The man seemed losing his reason. Till was startled at this sudden transformation.

"Calm yourself, Mr. Flight; it will all come right in the end," urged Till.

"But the fool may carry those papers to—to—to the one who must never get hold of them."

Flight paced the room in an agony of distress, till Neva went to his side, clasped his arm, and began to soothe his distraction with soft words. He seemed to grow more reconciled to the inevitable, and suffered the girl to lead him back to his room.

When she issued forth later, she said her father had fallen asleep, and told the boys to leave whenever they felt like doing so.

"We hate to go when you are in such a heap of trouble, Miss Flight," said tall Till Trodden, with his best bow. "Now Billy and I are at your service till your father feels better. Command us and we'll obey."

"Bet yer life!" corroborated Billy with his hand on his heart.

"I don't think you can do anything, but you are ever so kind, and I thank you," and tears filled the girl's violet eyes.

"Tell you what," offered Billy, "we'll hunt down this thieving Moses and get back the papers."

"My, I wish you would!"

"Oh, we will, never you fear," reiterated the Gabbs boy.

Till was silent. He was even more anxious than his companion to secure the return of the papers and the capture of missing Moses, but he was by no means as sanguine of success as was his friend Fatty.

"You must be hungry," said Neva. "Don't stir a step till I get you something to eat."

This sounded good to both lads, since no growing boy passes many hours of fasting without feeling a want beneath his jacket.

After partaking of a substantial lunch prepared by the girl, the two boys started to go upon their mission. As they were about to depart, Neva pressed a sack of food into the hand of the elder boy.

"You will need it before you are through with this search," she declared, and tall Till blushed under the glance of her violet eyes.

"You're too awfully kind," he said.

"We all have an interest in your success," went on the girl. "Papa wants his stolen papers back, and you wish to capture the thief and win that reward."

"We'd hunt him down without any reward," asserted Billy, as he gazed admiringly at Neva.

The girl went in to her father, while the boys waited her report before setting out on their quest.

"Papa doesn't seem to be in his room," said she, coming back to the two boys. She did not seem to be alarmed, however, so the boys thought nothing of the settler's absence at the time.

"If we only had a gun," suggested the fat boy.

"It would be nicer, of course," returned Till. "We may have some trouble conquering Moses Bunker without arms, while he is doubly provided."

"Wait a moment, and I will fetch papa's rifle."

Neva came back a few minutes later looking troubled as well as puzzled.

"What is it?" asked Billy.

"The rifle—it is gone," and she tried to laugh, making a very miserable attempt, however.

"Your daddy's rifle gone!" exclaimed Billy. "My, what a go! That sneak of a Bunker got that, too. He's a rum guy, and no mistake."

After a short consultation the boys decided to push on in pursuit of the missing Moses, even though they had no arms. Neva was quite nonplused because of the absence of both parent and rifle.

"I think," said she, as the boys were going away, "that papa has taken his gun and gone in pursuit of the person who stole his papers. You boys may meet up with him somewhere in the woods."

When the boys were well into the woods tall Till Trodden in advance, that youth came to a sudden halt, facing about, crying:

"I am afraid we are making a mistake, Billy."

"What now, old chap?"

"Why, in leaving the girl all alone in the house."

"Very likely her daddy leaves her that way often," said Billy.

"Perhaps, but——"

"But if this missing Moses should return, he might murder Miss Flight. Great snakes, Till! I never thought of that!"

"I didn't think of it till just this minute," returned the tall boy. "What do you say to our going back?"

"And giving up the chase for Moses Bunker?"

"Just that."

"Not on your life, Till old boy! We can't afford to throw away this chance of making a big money haul——"

"What's money compared to the life of a sweet girl like Neva?" tartly rejoined Trodden.

The two lads might have got into a heated argument had not something occurred to distract their attention—the sullen roar of crackling twigs, accompanied by the rank odor of burning pine boughs.

In an instant the tall boy knew what had happened—a fire had been suddenly kindled in their rear. Its roar burst loudly on their ears, while clouds of black smoke fell low and swept down through the woods upon them in smothering volume.

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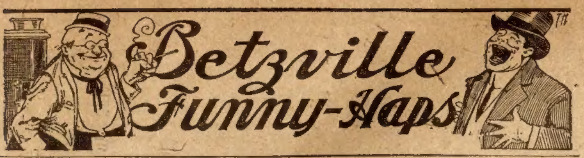
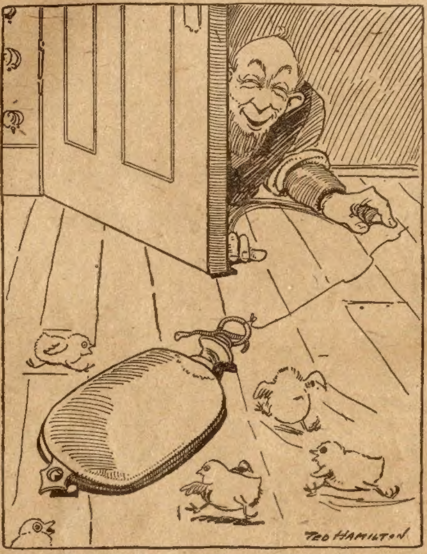


# Philo Gubb's Auto Hen

### By Ellis Parker Butler

(Copyright by W. G. Chapman.)



Hide behind the door and cluck like a hen.

Philo Gubb is one of the tenderest hearted men in Betzville. He hasn't the style necessary to mingle in our best society, but he has a good heart, and when his speckled hen died after setting on a nest of eggs for a week Philo's heart bled with pity for the poor motherless eggs. The very minute he saw the dead hen he hurried over to Aunt Rhinocolura Betz' and asked if he could borrow one of her hens, but they were all engaged in family business of their own just then, and Philo sat down on the edge of the porch and wept. After he had wept about a quart of tears he perked up all of a sudden, and asked Aunt Rhinocolura if she was using her water bottle. When she said no, that her neuralgia wasn't giving her much trouble that summer, Philo just jumped up and down for joy.

As soon as Aunt Rhinocolura gave him the hot-water bottle he hurried home, hippity hopping with joy, and filled the hot-water bottle up to the neck, and screwed the stopper in, and laid it with gentle hand on top of the eggs. During the day the eggs did not worry him much after that, for the sun kept the water in the hot-water bottle warm enough, but it was a touching sight to see Philo at night. He spent all his time at the edge of the nest, with an oil stove at his side and a tea kettle of water boiling away on the oil stove. He was like a mother to those eggs, and it was most affecting to hear him while he had the bottle in his hands, filling it and saying: "Now, now, dearies, don't be impatient, daddy will have mudder full of hot water in a minute, and then mudder will cuddle dearies up again."

The eggs seemed to understand the love Philo was showering on them, too. Of course an egg can't show its affection very well. Next to a china door knob an egg is about the dumbest uneffusive thing there is, but those eggs used to lie there and smile—no, not smile— they used to lie there and look up at—no, they didn't look up—anyway, they used to lie there. They used to lie there as quiet as thirteen brick-bats. They were just placidly happy, as you might say. Care free, knowing Philo would take good care of them and protect them.

Well, one egg got broken! It was nearly the death of Philo, and only the fact that there were twelve left kept him alive. He just couldn't allow himself to die of grief when there were twelve motherless eggs depending on him, so he braced up and tried to hide his sorrow, and kept the hot-water bottle warm.

The day those eggs hatched out was the gladdest in the life of Philo Gubb. He was a proud man, I can tell you! He gave each one a name as it pecked its way out. The first he called Eeny, and although he tried to be impartial, any one could see he liked this eldest a little the best. The next one he named Meeny, and the next Cracky. The others, as they came he named Feeny, Omma, Noocha, Poppa, Toocha, Rick, Stick, Stan and the last of all, the baby, as you might say, Staw. I remember how proud he was when Uncle Ashdod Clute asked him how the eggs were doing. Philo spoke right up. Says he:

"Eeny, Meeny, Cracky, Feeny—Omma, Noocha, Poppa, Toocha—Rick, Stick, Stan, Staw—O-U-T, all out!"

But the most gladdening thing to the hard heart of man was to see the way in which Philo helped supply a mother's care to those little chicks. They seemed to sense right at first that the hot-water bottle was the only mother they had, and they would run to it, chirping out their little joys and sorrows, and Philo kept it full of hot water, so it would feel cozy and comfortable to the chicks. He used to sneak away once in a while and dig a worm or two in the potato garden, and come back and drape it through the handle of the stopper of the bottle, and then hide behind the door and cluck like a hen does when it has found a worm, and then he would smile when the chicks ran up and grabbed the worm. When the chicks got large enough to venture out a little, Philo tied a string to the hot-water bottle and dragged it around the yard after them.

He got so thoroughly into the notion that the hot-water bottle was really a hen that sometimes he would drag it over into his vegetable garden, and then shoo at it to drive it out. He treated that auto-hen just as a mother hen should be treated.

Probably he took to it more because he was a bachelor and lived alone. He had less to distract his thoughts. The hot-water bottle grew so realistically hen-like to Philo that when the chicks got old enough to care for themselves, and Philo had a cousin from the city stay to dinner, he went into his back yard and looked over the chicks. He saw that they were not old enough to broil yet, so he got his ax and pounced down on the auto-hen, and chopped the stopper clean off. It wasn't until Philo grabbed what was left of the hot-water bottle and started to pick the feathers off that he realized it was not a real hen.

That is why I say it is mighty lucky hot-water bottles don't have feathers. If they did have Philo Gubb would have gone right ahead and cooked and eaten Aunt Rhinocolura's and as Philo is one of those who believe everything should be chewed to a pulp before it is swallowed, he would have sat there at his dining room table and have chewed his lower jaw clean off.

Look for another Funny-Hap in next week's Ledger. It is called "Finch and the Belgian Lapdog." You will get a laugh out of it sure.

❧ ❧ ❧

## An Interruption.

The Amateur Theatrical Society of Slapton-on-the-Slowe had decided to give an open-air performance of "A Midsummer-Night's Dream."

It was a huge success. The elite came in crowds and to the applause was added the sound of hammers of the carpenters and the trowels of the bricklayers who were engaged in building the new swimming baths in the park where the performance was given.

And that, perhaps, was the only flaw.

For suddenly, during a lull in the acting, came a voice from high up on the new building. 'Twas a bricklayer calling to his boy.

"I prithee," he cried, "young Malapert, pass me yon brick, an' it please you!"

❧ ❧ ❧

## Wit of Davis.

Richard Harding Davis, being a serious artist, has only contempt for those who merely dabble in the arts. This contempt shows itself in many amusing ways.

Thus a young painter once described to Davis a studio robbery of which he had been the victim.

"And the thieves," the painter ended, "took only the frames, leaving all my canvases behind."

Aha!" said Mr. Davis. "It's plain those fellows knew something about art."

On another occasion a would-be scribbler informed Mr. Davis that he had stopped writing.

"I only write enough now," he said, "to keep the wolf from the door."

"Why, the wolf can't read, can he?" said Mr. Davis.

❧ ❧ ❧

Customer—What have you in the shape of oranges?

Grocer—Well, we have baseballs.

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READ MY FREE OFFER

My Mission is to make sick women well, and I want to send you, your daughter, your sister, your mother, or any ailing friend, a full 50-cent box of Balm of Figs Compound absolutely free. It is a remedy for the treatment of woman's ailments, and I want to tell you all about it—just how to use it yourself—right at home without any inconvenience—and the best of it is that it will not in the least interfere with your work or pleasure. Balm of Figs Compound is a remedy that has made sick women well and weak women strong, and I can prove it—let me prove it to you, and I will gladly do it, for I have never heard of anything that has, according to the abundance of testimonials at hand, so quickly and surely cured woman's ailments. No internal dosing necessary—it is a local treatment, yet it has to its credit some of the most extraordinary cures on record. Therefore, I want to place it in the hands of every woman suffering with any form of Leucorrhea, Painful Periods, Ulceration, Inflammation, Uterine Displacements: Ovarian or Uterine Tumors or Growths, or any of the weaknesses so common to women.

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I will send it to you absolutely free, to prove to you its splendid qualities, and then if you wish to continue further, it will cost you only a few cents a week. I do not believe there is another remedy equal to Balm of Figs Compound, and I am willing to prove my faith by sending out these 50-cent boxes free. So, dear reader, irrespective of your past experience, write to me at once — today — and I will send you the treatment entirely free by return mail, and if you so desire, I can readily refer you to many, who can personally testify to the great and lasting cures that have resulted from the use of this remedy. But after all, the very best test of anything is a personal trial of it, and I know a 50-cent box of Balm of Figs Comcound will convince you of its merits. Nothing is so convincing as the actual test of the article itself. Will you give Balm of Figs Compound this test? Write to me today, and remember I will gladly send you a 50-cent box of this remedy absolutely free. Address,
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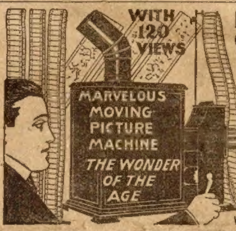

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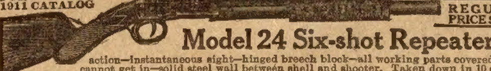

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For Men, Women and Children.

Protects your neck and chest, leaves no room for snow or rain to get down your collar. Fits any size neck and always looks well. The wool is knitted in such a way it just fits under your coat collar around your neck and buttons snugly up to your neck. The ends are made just long enough to hang down under your coat and to thoroughly protect the chest against the dangers of colds, pneumonia, croup, etc.

All you need to do to put it on is to place it around the neck, cross it over, and button the snap button. Nothing easier—no pins or clasps to scratch your neck or fingers—nothing to tear or rip. Once put on it stays on—and in place too. They come in two colors—snow white and maroon red. The picture shows it on a man, but women and children wear them just as much. In fact, pa, ma, and the children like them equally well.

How to get the Muffler Free!

In the first place do it right away, for they are mighty neat and dainty and the demand is big, but the stock is limited. This dandy knitted muffler, in either white or red, will be given for a limited time free, all charges prepaid by us, to any one who fills out the coupon below and send it to us with one dollar for a year's subscription to the Chicago Ledger. We treat old and new subscribers alike on this magnificent offer—if you are already a subscriber send the dollar and we will extend your subscription a year from the time it now expires. Some people are renewing for two or three years so they can get them for other members of the family, for they are great—believe us.

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Enclosed find one dollar for a year's subscription to The Chicago Ledger. Please send the muffler free of all charges to me.

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Color of Muffler wanted.............. This is a..................(new or renewal) Su[illegible]

## Mr. and Mrs. Moon.

(Continued from page six.)

shabby black man had carr'ed a bomb in the shabby black box. Thrice he had tried to secrete the explosive in the building which Paoli Micheli was seen to frequent, and this third time he had succeeded in placing the bomb!

Timothy Moon was an omnivorous reader of the daily papers. He knew all about the black hand and their machinations—their blood-thirstiness and disregard of the innocent, so that they reached the man they had marked for punishment.

The devils would blow up a houseful of innocent people to "get square" with Dago Mike. Mr. Moon's legs, though very sturdy limbs indeed, took under him as he stumbled down the remainder of the flight.

At the rear of the hall, under the stairs, was an unused closet. Timothy turned up the hall light and crept along the passage toward this reasonable hiding-place clutching the water-pitcher as a weapon.

The closet door was ajar. He stooped and listened. There was a rustling within—a strange murmur of sound that might be—so Timothy believed—the clockwork of a time-bomb!

Timothy jerked open the door. The closet was as black as a pocket. He dared not go fumbling around in the darkness, so he quickly scratched a match and held it above his head. There was the black bag. To his excited vision it seemed to leap toward him! At least, it moved—Timothy would have sworn to it. The rustling noise came from it.

Mr. Moon was just as badly scared as any other man would have been, saving the modern hero of a story book; but he was not panic-stricken.

The black-hander had left the bomb, its mechanism started, under this stairway; and when it exploded the people upstairs would be entirely cut off from proper egress to the street. If fire started everybody might be burned to death.

The bandy-legged Timothy was no figure of a hero. He shakingly set the silver pitcher down and approached the box. The match burned to his finger-tips, but he did not feel them scorch.

He stooped slowly and seized the box, dropping the red coal of the match as he did so. He thought he could feel the mechanism within leap at his touch. He expected the thing to explode and blow him through the roof as he gingerly brought it out into the light of the hall.

The black box was perhaps twenty inches long and half as wide and tall. It had a brass handle on top to carry it by. The end and part of the top were hinged, the leaves remaining in place because they were hooked together. The box, in fact, was an old camera cover.

Timothy's ideas were in a good deal of a haze. He had heard that the police always soaked a suspected bomb in a bucket of water. He was afraid the bomb might explode while he hunted up a pail. The thing shook in his hand. The mechanism must be very powerful to rattle the box like that!

"Sure now, and I don't know is it a bomb?" muttered Timothy. "'Tis here it opens."

He slipped back the brass hook that held the end and top together. They flew apart like the covers of a jack-in-the-box.

There was no explosion, save from Timothy himself. Something leaped out of the box and into his very face and eyes. He went over backward with a roar that startled the whole house.

The thing—a white something that bounded like a rubber ball—butted him so shrewd a blow that the claret began to flow from his nose while he was yet on his back, kicking the surrounding atmosphere futilely. Over his prostrate body the thing sprang and then thumped along the hall and started up the stairs. Timothy struggled up, saw it mounting the flight in a series of jerky jumps, and gave chase, roaring:

"Stop it! Sure I'll wring th' neck of that baste! Stop it!"

The crowd from his own rooms rushed out, and choking the head of the flight, the creature was headed off.

"What is it?" was the chorus.

"Look out! 'Tis a dinnimite bomb. Ketch it!" yelled the excited Timothy.

The animated bomb saw more foes in front than in the rear, turned with a flirt of its comical tail, and leaped straight at Timothy again. The bargeman was already several steps up the flight, and that rabbit weighed at least fifteen pounds.

It landed on Timothy's chest with the force of a pile-driver. It was one of those combats where there were but two blows struck—the first when the rabbit hit Timothy, the other when Timothy hit the floor.

Mr. Moon lay there, studying astronomy, while the frightened buck raced up and down the hall, to be finally captured by the doctor.

"I suppose this must be mine," admitted the physician, grinning at Mr. Moon as he slowly arose from his recumbent posture, rubbing the goose-egg on the back of his head.

"The fellow I bought it of brought it, I presume, and couldn't find me in. I got it for some bacterial experiments. How do you feel now, Mr. Moon?"

"Like a domned fool! Gimme that pitcher," grunted Mr. Moon.

* * *

### FOR THE WOMAN THAT'S FAT.

A Detroit physician says that the cheapest and safest mixture a fat woman who wants to get thin can use is ½ ounce Marmola (get it in the original ½-ounce package), ½ ounce Fluid Extract Cascara Aromatic and 3½ ounces Peppermint Water. The proper amount to take is a teaspoonful after meals and at bedtime.

These ingredients may be obtained from any druggist at small cost, and make a combination that is not only excellent as a fat reducer, being able, it is claimed, to take off a pound a day without causing wrinkles, but is also a splendid help to the system as a whole, regulating the stomach and bowels (where the fat person's troubles begin), and clearing the skin of pimples and blotches. No exercise is required to help the remedy in its work and, best of all, no dieting is necessary while taking it—you can eat what you like.

* * *

### Agrees With Plato.

"The author of genius," said William Dean Howells at a dinner in New York, "expressed the thoughts of his time. He speaks out those things that his generation has all along been thinking—but thinking silently, and perhaps, a little mistily.

"An author of transcendental genius speaks the thought of all time. For example—one summer at Sunapee I loaned a volume of Plato to a lean, shrewd farmer. When the volume was returned I said:

"'Well, how did you like Plato?'

"'Fust rate,' the farmer answered. 'I see he's got some of my ideas.'"

* * *

J. P.

Those suffering from weakness and lack of vigor should take JUVEN PILLS. One box will tell a story of marvelous results. This medicine has more rejuvenating, vitalizing force than has ever before been offered. Sent postpaid only on receipt of this advertisement and $1. Made by its originators, C. I. HOOD CO., proprietors Hood's Sarsaparilla, LOWELL, MASS. (Z)

* * *

### Often the Case.

Mrs. Frontpue (to minister's wife)—Why is your husband always asking for money, money, money?

[illegible]r's Wife (wearily)—I presume [illegible]ause he never gets any.

### What He Was Thinking.

A grandfather of a South Philadelphia home walked into the sitting room and found his grandson in deep thought.

"John," he said, "I will give you a nickel if you will tell me what you are thinking about."

No effect was produced on the grandson at all.

"I say, John, I will give you a quarter if you will tell me," said the grandfather.

With that remark the grandson jumped up and demanded the money, which was readily turned over to him.

"I was thinking, grandpa," he said, "how I could earn some money without working for it."

* * *

### Proved His Assertion.

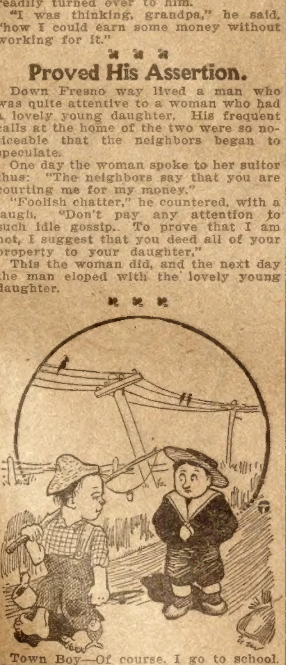
Down Fresno way lived a man who was quite attentive to a woman who had a lovely young daughter. His frequent calls at the home of the two were so noticeable that the neighbors began to speculate.

One day the woman spoke to her suitor thus: "The neighbors say that you are courting me for my money."

"Foolish chatter," he countered, with a laugh. "Don't pay any attention to such idle gossip. To prove that I am not, I suggest that you deed all of your property to your daughter."

This the woman did, and the next day the man eloped with the lovely young daughter.

* * *



Town Boy—Of course, I go to school. I'd walk fourteen miles rather than miss it.

Fish Creek Kid—Aw! That's all right! You probably need the education.

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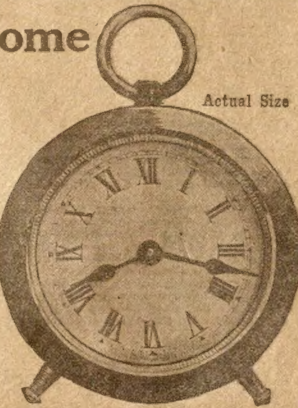


This handsome brass clock is a time meter that will grace your table or mantel piece with beauty and adornment. It is made of brass with the brush brass finish. The dial is plain white and, as you see, the hands are gracefully designed to point to the hours and minutes in the plainest manner. The glass covering the dial is beveled and thick so that it can stand rough handling. The works are especially imported and have a thirty-two hour movement, that is, it needs to be wound only once in thirty-two hours.

The stands holding the clock up are also of brass, secure and very strong. In the back the winding and setting screws are well made and are large enough so that your fingers can reach them. The whole clock is designed to combine the best time keeping in the neatest and most compact form possible. But, above all—

WE ABSOLUTELY GUARANTEE IT

against defects, for this clock is thoroughly tested, examined and regulated before it leaves the factory, and if there are any defects in the material and workmanship, you can return it at once at our expense.

It will look well on your mantel-piece or on your table among your best things. Hour after hour, year after year it faithfully performs its duty of telling you the correct time.

With this little mountain of dependability you will be on time for your appointments and always have a standard time-piece in your house for your whole family to set their watches by.

This is, indeed the most beautiful and valuable premium we have offered, and this offer will appeal to thousands of our readers, for this clock is **absolutely free.**

**Read Below How to Get the Clock Free,** and get it at once, for we are able to make this big offer only through a lucky purchase and the supply is limited.

How to Get the Beautiful Brass Clock Free

There are four ways to get this clock FREE. The first way is to send us $2.00 for a year's subscription to The Saturday Blade and Chicago Ledger together, and on receipt of your subscription, we will send you this handsome brass clock free, all charges prepaid.

The second way is: If you prefer either one of these great papers for yourself get some friend to send their subscription to either one of the papers along with yours and send us the $2.00, and we will send you the clock absolutely free, all charges prepaid. Of course, your friend would not be entitled to the clock, but the good value of the Blade and Ledger should appeal enough to induce your friend to give you the subscription.

The third way is, if any of your friends do not wish to subscribe for the paper for a whole year, you may send in two six-months' subscriptions along with your yearly subscription and we will send the clock to you all charges prepaid.

The fourth way is, if you do not know some friend who is willing to send a subscription to either the Blade or Ledger along with yours send your own subscription for the paper that you want for two years.

THE SATURDAY BLADE—America's greatest Weekly Newspaper is the largest paper of its kind in America, and its growth has only been possible through its progress and leadership. During the last year it has met with wonderful success in its new and novel features. For the coming year many new and extremely interesting features are planned that will make this great paper even more entertaining.

During 1912 the Ledger is fortunate to have contracted for the stories from the pens of its most popular writers of the last year, and there will also appear stories from many new and successful writers, whose work has just lately been secured.

There are stories of detective work, love, marriage, occult mysteries, airships, submarine boats, mining, cowboy life, millionaire and Wall street schemes, soldier experience, perils at sea, new inventions, government secret service work, lumber-jack life, and many other phases of human experience. In addition to stories of dramatic and serious character, the Ledger will give its readers many stories and sketches from America's most famous funny writers, notably from the celebrated laugh-producers, Ellis Parker Butler, George V. Hobart, Hugh Pendexter, Ed Mott and W. Bert Foster.

These men have set the whole country laughing, and the readers of the Ledger are going to have the full benefit of their wit and humor in 1912.

Any one of these stories in book form is worth the price of the subscription to the Blade and Ledger.

We Treat Old and New Subscribers Alike on This Offer.

If you are already a subscriber to the Blade and Ledger send us $2.00 and we will renew your subscription for one year from the time it expires. If you only take one of the papers and do not care to take the other send us $2.00 to renew your subscription for two years, and we will send the clock.

Don't fail to take advantage of this offer, for it is one of the best offers made. You will realize when you get the clock what a beautiful time piece it is.

With your order just say you want the Brass Clock.

SUBSCRIPTION DEPARTMENT, W. D. BOYCE CO.,
CANADA SUBSCRIPTION $1.50 A YEAR. 500 Dearborn Avenue, Chicago, Ill.

### CONTENTMENT.

The day is sweet, the night is pure!
In spite of all that men endure
Of toil and hardship, life is fine,
And beautiful its sparkling wine
Of loving and complete content
To those who keep its faith is sent.

The air is fresh, the sun is bright!
In spite of all that is not right
In some lives unto whom the gloom
Oft seems more plenteous than the bloom.
God will an equal radiance send
To those who trust unto the end.

The earth is fair, the flowers are sweet!
In spite of all that men may meet
In warfare of the grim defeat.
One victory over all still glows—
The attitude of calm repose
The heart's unfaltering trusting knows.

The stars are calm, the sky is still!
In spite of all men feel of ill,
There is large measure of the good
If only life be understood
As something to whose best must we
Bring something, too, our sympathy!

* * *

## Put to the Test.

A company of young men, enjoying the pleasures of a summer trip, chanced to stop for a few days at the village of E———. The men of the village, eager to hear something from the outside world, gathered, in the evening, at that one oasis in a country village—the public tavern.

The young men told them of their many journeys both by land and by sea, till finally the conversation turned upon ghosts. One of the strangers, who, according to his own account, had put to flight more ghosts than all the rest combined, seeing some of the party smile as if they did not believe all that he said, dared any one to put his bravery to the test.

One of the villagers declared that he would see of what stuff this boastful youngster was made. He dared him to go to a certain spot in the village cemetery, and there repeat three times the words: "Ye dead arise!" The stranger agreed to go.

An old half-demented negro woman was in the habit of going to this cemetery at night and lying down among the graves, to await, as she said, "the coming of the Lord." On this particular night she had taken her accustomed place.

The young stranger, led by the villagers to the churchyard gate, opened it, and stumbled along until he came to the spot designated. He stopped, and slowly repeated:

"Ye dead, arise!"

He began the second time, when, to his horror, came forth the answer:

"Yes, massa, I'se a-comin'!" and, amid sighs and groans, the good old darky raised herself from the ground and looked around for the heavenly messenger.

Sad was her disappointment at seeing no one. Still more sorrowful was the face of that would-be "conquering hero," as, half dead with fright, he fled from the cemetery, and joined his companions at the gate.

* * *

## Unconscious Humor.

The Saginaw News says that "three cows were cremated in a fire at Montrose."

An Illinois paper informs us that "Mrs. Charles Lindquist of Bloomington is the guest of her husand on East Monroe street."

An Iowa paper, referring to a fatal shooting accident which befell a prominent citizen says "he met his death at the hands of a horse."

In the report of a wedding in Missouri, we read, "Miss Daisy Defoe presided at the piano and beautifully played Mendol and Son's wedding march."

A Georgia society note: "Deputy Marshall Bowling and Marvin Adams will attend the hanging of John Withrow at Blue Ridge on Friday of this week. We understand the hanging will be private."

A Nevada editor's note of thanks: "We have received a basket of apples from our friend, Gus Bradley, for which he will please accept our compliments, some of which are nearly six inches in diameter."

* * *

## Astronomic Spiders.

Cultivation for scientific uses of certain species of spiders, solely for the fine threads they weave, has an important bearing upon astronomy. No substitute for the spider's thread has yet been found for bisecting the screw of the micrometer used for determining the positions and motions of the stars. Not only because of the remarkable fineness of the threads are they valuable, but because of their durable qualities.

The threads of certain spiders raised for astronomical purposes withstand changes in temperature, so that often in measuring sun spots they are uninjured when the heat is so great that the lenses of the micrometer eyepieces are cracked. These spider lines are only one-fifth to one-seventh of a thousandth of an inch in diameter, compared with which the threads of the silkworm are large and clumsy.

* * *

### When Conscience Speaks.

Tommy—Pop, what is conscience?

Tommy's Papa—Conscience, my son, is a still, small voice that tells a man when his liver is out of order.

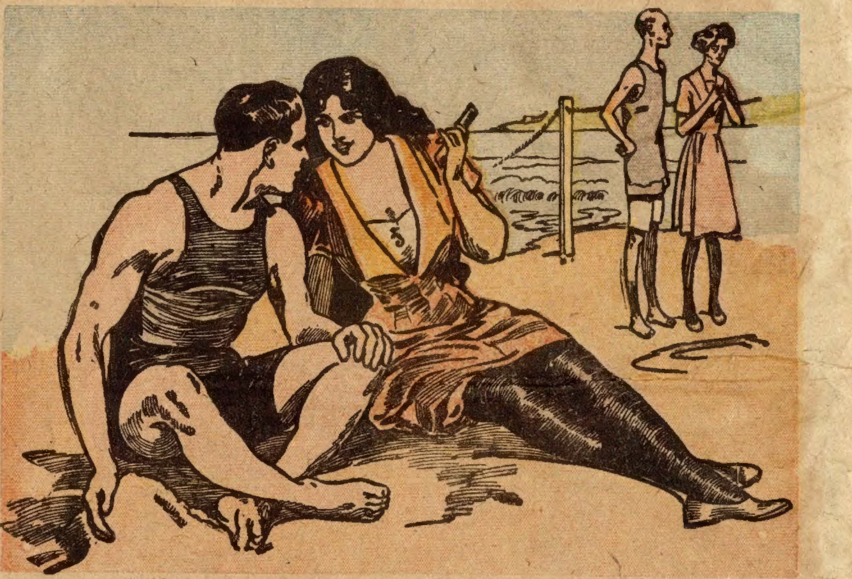
# LET US MAKE YOU FAT

## 50-Cent Box Free!

## We Will Prove at Our Own Expense That It Is No Longer Necessary to Be Thin, Scrawny and Undeveloped.

## WE INVITE EVERY THIN MAN and WOMAN HERE

### Every Reader of The Chicago Ledger Who is Run Down, Nervous or Underweight, to Get Fat at Our Expense.



**"Gee! Look at that pair of skinny scarecrows! Why don't they try Sargol?"**

This is a generous offer to every thin man or woman reader of The Chicago Ledger. We positively guarantee to increase your weight to your own satisfaction or no pay. Think this over—think what it means. At our own risk, we offer to put 10, 15, yes, 30 pounds of good, solid "stay there" flesh on your bones, to fill out hollows in cheeks, neck or bust, to get rid of that "peaked" look, to rejuvenate and revitalize your whole body until it tingles with vibrant energy; to do this without drastic diet, "tonics," severe physical culture "stunts," detention from business or any irksome requirements—if we fail it costs you nothing.

We particularly wish to hear from the excessively thin, those who know the humiliation and embarrassment which only skinny people have to suffer in silence. We want to send a free 50-cent package of our new discovery to the people who are called "slats" and "bean poles," to bony women, whose clothes never look "anyhow," no matter how expensively dressed, to the skinny men who fail to gain social or business recognition on account of their starved appearance. We care not whether you have been thin from birth, whether you have lost flesh through sickness, how many flesh builders you have experimented with. We take the risk and assume it cheerfully. If we can not put pounds and pounds of healthy flesh on your frame we don't want your money.

How can we do this? We will tell you. Science has discovered a remarkable concentrated treatment which increases cell growth, the very substance of which our bodies are made—a treatment that makes indigestion and other stomach troubles disappear as if by magic and makes an old dyspeptic or a sufferer from weak nerves or lack of vitality feel like a 2-year-old. This new treatment which has proved a boon to every thin person, is called **Sargol.** Don't forget the name—**"S-A-R-G-O-L."** Nothing like it has ever been produced before. It is a revelation to women who have never been able to appear stylish in anything they wore because of their thinness. It is a godsend to every man who is under weight or is lacking in nerve force or energy. If you want a beautiful and well-rounded figure of symmetrical proportions, of which you can feel justly proud—if you want a body full of throbbing life and energy, write The Sargol Company, 100-M, Herald Building, Binghamton, N. Y., to-day, and we will send you, absolutely free, a 50c. box of Sargol that will prove all we claim. Take one with every meal, and in five minutes after you take the first concentrated tablet of this precious product it will commence to unfold its virtues, and it has by actual demonstration often increased the weight at the rate of one pound a day. But you say you want proof. Well, here you are. Here is the statement of those who have tried—who have been convinced—and who will swear to the virtues of this marvelous preparation:

## WHAT SARGOL HAS DONE FOR OTHERS

**When we mail you the Free 50-cent package of Sargol, we will send you copies of letters received from grateful patrons, reporting actual gains in solid healthy permanent flesh, of from ten to over thirty pounds.**

**We give here a few interesting figures from reports which are being received daily.**

**REV. GEORGE W. DAVIS says:**

"I have made a faithful trial of the Sargol treatment and must say it has brought to me new life and vigor. I have gained twenty pounds and now weigh 170 pounds, and what is better, I have gained the days of my boyhood. It has been the turning point of my life. My health is now fine. I don't have to take any medicine at all and never want to again."

**MRS. A. I. RODENHEISER writes:**

"I have gained immensely since I took Sargol, for I only weighed about 106 pounds when I began using it and now I weigh 130 pounds, so really this makes 24 pounds. I feel stronger and am looking better than ever before, and now I carry rosy cheeks, which is something I could never say before.

"My old friends who have been used to seeing me with a thin, long face, say that I am looking better than they have ever seen me before, and father and mother are so well pleased to think I have got to look so well and weigh so heavy for me."

**F. GAGNON writes:**

"Here is my report since taking the Sargol treatment. I am a man 67 years of age and was all run down to the very bottom. I had to quit work as I was so weak. Now, thanks to Sargol, I look like a new man. I gained 22 pounds with 26 days' treatment. I cannot tell you how happy I feel. All my clothes are getting too tight. My face has a good color and I never was so happy in my life."

| | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **C E. Crouner** | **gained** | **15** | **lbs.** | **in** | **30** | **days.** |
| **Thomas Davis** | " | 10 | " | " | 16 | " |
| **Leonore Patton** | " | 16 | " | " | 30 | " |
| **Mrs. Seim** | " | 13 | " | " | 20 | " |
| **Mrs. A. Arnott** | " | 10 | " | " | 40 | " |
| **F. A. Myrick** | " | 20 | " | " | 30 | " |
| **Philip Drapeau** | " | 9 | " | " | 30 | " |
| **Mrs. S. E. Murray** | " | 30 | " | " | 40 | " |
| **Mary Bland** | " | 18 | " | " | 40 | " |
| **W. W. Allis** | " | 36 | " | " | 50 | " |
| **Wm. Carmichael** | " | 5 | " | " | 10 | " |
| **Arthur Stewart** | " | 5 | " | " | 12 | " |
| **Mrs. C. Craig** | " | 13 | " | " | 30 | " |
| **Mrs. N. Galliger** | " | 18 | " | " | 35 | " |

**Send to day for our free 50-cent package and let us prove that**

## SARGOL SHOULD DO THE SAME FOR YOU

This treatment increases the red corpuscles in the blood, strengthens the nerves and puts the digestive tract into such shape that your food is assimilated and turned into good, solid, healthy flesh instead of passing through the system undigested and unassimilated. It is a thoroughly scientific principle, this Sargol, and builds up the thin, weak and debilitated without any nauseous dosing. In many conditions it is better than cod liver oil and certainly is much pleasanter to take.

Send for the 50-cent box today. Convince us by your prompt acceptance of this offer that you are writing in good faith and really desire to gain in weight. The 50-cent package which we will send you free will be an eye-opener to you. We send it that you may see the simple, harmless nature of our new discovery, how easy it is to take, how you gain flesh privately without knowledge of friends or family until you astonish them by the prompt and unmistakable results.

We could not publish this offer in The Chicago Ledger if we were not prepared to live up to it. It is only the astounding results of our new method of treatment that make such an offer and such a guarantee possible on our part. So cut off the coupon today and mail it at once to The Sargol Company, 100-M Herald Bldg., Binghamton, N. Y., and please inclose 10c with your letter to help pay distribution expenses. Take our word, you'll never regret it.

## FREE COUPON

**COME EAT WITH US AT OUR EXPENSE**

This coupon entitles any thin person to one 50c. package of Sargol, the concentrated Flesh Builder (provided you have never tried it), and that 10c. is enclosed to cover postage, packing, etc. Read our advertisement printed above, and then put 10c. in stamps in letter to-day, with this coupon, and the full 50c. package will be sent to you by return of post. Address: The Sargol Company, 100-M, Herald Bldg., Binghamton, N. Y. Write your name and address plainly, and

**PIN THIS COUPON TO YOUR LETTER.**